

# THE EUROPEAN MEN-ECVET PROJECT

**Summary of work**



# **The European MEN- ECVET project**

**Summary of work carried  
out in the framework of  
the MEN-ECVET project  
and presented at the final  
conference organised by  
the Centre International  
d'Etudes Pédagogiques on  
11 April 2013**

The European MEN-ECVET project, run by the French Ministry of Education, was conducted over the course of two years, beginning in January 2011, with the support of the Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques (CIEP). The final conference on the project, held on 11 April 2013, provided an opportunity to present all of the work carried out within the framework of the project, together with the results thereof.

This final conference brought together various types of participants, including the following:

- the French experts involved in conducting and implementing the project from the French Ministry of Education (Directorate General for Schools– Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training), the General and Regional Inspectorate of National Education and the CIEP;
- experts from the project's European partner organisations in Germany, Belgium and Spain, including the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, the Centre for the Coordination and Management of European Programmes under the Ministry of Compulsory Education of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and the Department of Education of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia;
- experts from French organisations associated with the project, including the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue, the Cereq or 'Centre for research on education, training and employment' and CCI France (national board of chambers of commerce and industry);
- representatives of French national authorities in charge of awarding qualifications, notably from various ministries, craft, trade and industry chambers networks and industry sectors;
- representatives of the national secretariat of the Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle, or 'National Committee for Vocational Qualification';
- representatives of the secretariat of the European ECVET network;
- the 'ECVET experts' team connected to the French agency dealing with the European Lifelong learning Programme, and called Agence Europe Education Formation France ;
- an expert from GHK Consulting and consultant to the European Commission.

The present publication comprises a report on this final conference on the MEN-ECVET project.

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# Reminder of context

## The MEN-ECVET project

**By Maryannick Malicot, head of the Vocational diplomas department – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for Schools DGESCO) – MEN-ECVET project manager**

A European call for proposals was launched in 2010 in order to support a series of national pilot projects devoted specifically «to the ECVET system». These projects were intended to test and prepare for the implementation of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) outlined in a European recommendation adopted in 2009.

With this European recommendation, the question asked to national authorities in charge of awarding qualifications, and particularly to the French Ministry of Education, was: can vocational qualifications allow part of any training completed and assessed abroad to be 'officially' recognised? The French Ministry of Education therefore took the opportunity presented by the 2010 call for proposals to attempt to answer this question. As a result, the MEN-ECVET project was selected together with seven other European projects.

A long-term endeavour (three years including the preparation period) was consequently undertaken jointly by the French Ministry of Education which is the project manager, the Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques (CIEP), which is the legal promoter and in charge of the administrative and financial aspects, and a scientific committee including French and European partners whose external perspective helped advance reflection and the conceptualisation stage. This collaboration was indeed one of the keys to the project's success.

MEN-ECVET was designed taking into account the fact that improving the mobility of young people, and

particularly young people undergoing initial vocational education and training, is a major European issue in both quantitative and qualitative terms.<sup>1</sup>

With this in mind, the project aimed at studying how and under what conditions the principles of the ECVET system could be taken into account regarding our vocational qualifications (vocational diplomas), with a transnational mobility perspective and whilst maintaining the specific characteristics of our diplomas: existence of general units as part of the qualifications requirements alongside specific vocational units, access to qualifications through formal learning as well as through informal or non-formal learning thanks to the 'recognition of prior learning scheme', principle of the wholeness of the qualification with unit-based assessments but that cannot lead to partial awarding of the diploma.

The project focused on the French Ministry of Education's flagship vocational qualification, namely the baccalauréat professionnel (indexed as level IV in the French system, corresponding to level 4 of the European Qualifications Framework). Five fields were chosen to be looked at in greater detail : customer/user relation services, accounting and secretarial, support, care and personal services, electrotechnics ,building.

The operational objective was to end up in a series of recommendations about the writing of vocational qualifications and the allocation of points, as well as further recommendations about the organisational and operational provisions necessary for recognition of learning outcomes achieved and assessed abroad as part of a vocational qualification.

1. The Council of the European Union adopted a new 'European benchmark' in 2011; by 2020, an EU average of at least 6% of 18-34-year-olds with an initial vocational education and training (VET) qualification should have had an initial VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks, or less if documented by Europass.

## **The recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training ECVET**

**By Martine Paty, in charge of European matters related to vocational training – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for SchoolsDGESCO)**

The European recommendation regarding the 'ECVET system' was adopted in June 2009 following several years of exploratory works (including studies, pilot projects, public consultations, etc.) carried out at the European level. It took place in the framework of the European cooperation process dedicated to vocational training and known as the 'Copenhagen Process'.

This recommendation stems from the principle of subsidiarity and should be taken into account in accordance with national legislations. It is intended to encourage the recognition of learning outcomes assessed during international mobility for learners preparing to complete a vocational qualification. The MEN-ECVET project was based on the technical specifications of this recommendation. Indeed, the European text provides as follows:

vocational qualifications should be divided into and defined as a series of 'units of learning outcomes' expressed in terms of 'knowledge', 'skills' and

'competence', which are the descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework; these units should not be confused with any components of formal training programmes;

- points should be allocated for vocational qualifications, as well as the component units thereof, with a view to 'providing additional information' and determining the relative weight of the units in relation both to one another and to the qualification as a whole;
- units assessment procedures and criteria should be clearly defined.

Based on these principles, the 'ECVET credit' system, with a transnational mobility perspective, should be implemented in the following way: a learner preparing to get a vocational qualification in his home country could complete a period of training in another country and have the learning outcomes acquired assessed there. This positively assessed learning outcomes (which then become a 'credit') could then be transferred to the home country, validated and recognised, with this recognition resulting in the "awarding of the unit and the corresponding ECVET points" (the recommendation distinguishes between the notions of 'credit' and 'points').

"In ECVET, units of learning outcomes achieved in one setting are assessed and then, after successful assessment, transferred to another setting. In this second context, they are validated and recognised by the competent institution as part of the requirements for the qualification that the person is aiming to achieve."

The recommendation provides for the use of specific tools to support this process, such as the memorandum of understanding, the learning agreement and the personal transcript.

The whole system relies on the trust of the home country in the assessment carried out by the 'host' institution.

**For further information please visit <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0011:0018:FR:PDF>**

# The various vocational qualifications (diplomas) issued by the French Ministry of Education

**By Maryannick Malicot, head of the Vocational diplomas department – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for Schools DGESCO)**

Various ministries develop vocational qualifications (ministries responsible for higher education, agriculture, health, sport, etc.). The French Ministry of Education, for its part, creates and awards various vocational qualifications which are called ‘vocational diplomas’. They correspond to levels 3 and 4 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The Ministry of Education currently offers some 600 vocational qualifications/diplomas covering various fields, the majority of which are level 3 (the certificat d’aptitude professionnelle) and level 4 (the baccalauréat professionnel) qualifications.

## These vocational qualifications or diplomas...

- have a nationwide value and certify that graduates can hold a qualified job;
- enable graduates to integrate into the workplace and/or continue their studies;
- include a detailed description of the vocational activities and tasks the holder is able to perform;
- require the holder to acquire vocational as well as general knowledge, skills and competence;
- are accessible to young people by means of initial vocational training and to adults by means of continuing education (formal learning) or through the ‘recognition of prior learning scheme’ and therefore potentially without any formal training.

Furthermore, they have distinctive characteristics with regards to the following:

### The way in which they are created

The decision to create, update or revoke a vocational qualification/diploma and the content thereof is made by the appropriate minister who is obliged to consult advisory bodies known as Commissions Professionnelles Consultatives, CPC (‘Professional Advisory Committees’). These are bodies bringing employer and employee representatives, public authorities and qualified individuals together to consult and give their opinion on the creation, updating or withdrawal of vocational diplomas. There are 14 such bodies in existence, covering the major fields of economic

activity.

Design of the content of the diplomas is then overseen by representatives of the French Ministry of Education, who ensure that national standards are adhered to. This work involves the contribution of representatives from various professional spheres employers and employees (definition of the activities targeted by the qualification in question and the skills the individual is expected to acquire) as well as training and assessment professionals.

As a result, no vocational diploma can be created without first being approved by the appropriate professional sphere(s); the content of a vocational diploma, compiled by means of a collective effort, represents a consensus reached between all of the parties involved.

### Their foundation

Each specific vocational diploma is created by a ministerial decree that specifies the content of the qualification by means of a series of descriptive documents attached thereto which form the structure of the qualification. All vocational diplomas are based on a particular structure that is defined by a series of statutory texts featuring in the Code de l’Education (collection of education-related laws and decrees) and outlined in a ‘national guide for the design of vocational diplomas, which does not, in itself, have any regulatory value.

### Their structure and their content

The structure for all vocational diplomas comprises::

- othe ‘professional activities standard’: based on an analysis of working situations corresponding to the aims of the diploma, it outlines the activities and tasks that the holder of the diploma will be able to perform in the early years of their professional life;
- othe ‘certification standard’: this document describes the vocational skills required to perform said activities and that the holder of the qualification must demonstrate. These skills include what the graduate should be able to do (techniques, procedures, professional behaviour, etc.), specifying the context in which they are performed and the assessment criteria. On the one hand, they include what the graduate should know (associated knowledge), specifying notions and concepts as well as the knowledge limits required;
- othe document outlining ‘the terms of certification’, which describes the following:
  - the component units of the vocational diploma, representing a coherent series of skills and knowledge aspects;
  - the examination regulations, specifying the relative weight and the duration of the test for each

- vocational and general unit;
- the terms governing the certification assessment for the different categories of candidates, specifying the content and the method of assessment (final assessment, during training assessment, number and quality of examiners, etc.);
- a description of the expectations for the 'training periods in the workplace' that are compulsory for all students preparing to get vocational diplomas.
- Vocational qualifications awarded by the French Ministry of Education, on the other hand, do not incorporate any pedagogical specifications relating to the implementation of the trainings. Such aspects are covered in resource documentation that has no regulatory basis.

## The main vocational qualifications/diplomas developed and awarded by the French Ministry of Education:

The vocational diplomas awarded by the French Ministry of Education include the certificat d'aptitude professionnelle (CAP), the baccalauréat professionnel, the mention complémentaire, the brevet des métiers d'arts, the brevet professionnel and the brevet d'études professionnelles (BEP), among others.

The two main diplomas are the following:

### **The Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle (Certificate of Vocational Aptitude) – French level V corresponding to 3 EQF**

Created in 1911, is the oldest vocational diploma. It certifies a first level of qualification and awards a blue collar or qualified employee qualification. Focussed on the acquisition of practical know-how, it allows immediate entry into the workplace in approximately 200 sectors. In initial vocational training, pupils work towards it over two years after the last year of collège (lower secondary school). The main aim of this qualification is entry into employment. But graduates can also continue studies and get a Baccalauréat professionnel.

### **The Baccalauréat professionnel (Vocational Baccalaureate) – French level IV corresponding to 4 EQF**

It certifies an ability to hold a highly qualified occupation. The Baccalauréat professionnel (Vocational Baccalaureate) is offered through 90 specialties in a wide range of sectors (retail, services, catering, maintenance, secretarial work, accountancy, the building trade, agriculture and so on) as well as in very specialised ones (watch-making, jewellery, fashion and so on).

As part of initial vocational training, pupils study for this diploma over three years after the last year.

## The methodology of the MEN-ECVET project

**By Maryannick Malicot, head of the Vocational diplomas department – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for Schools – DGESCO)**

The aim of the project was to look at how the principles of the ECVET system could be taken into account regarding our vocational qualifications and with a transnational mobility perspective. The method adopted is therefore characterised by the following elements:

- a systematic approach: the decision was made to base the project on the flagship qualification of vocational education, this being the baccalauréat professionnel. Five specific diplomas were chosen to be looked at in greater detail, taking into account the variety of sectors represented (production and services) and the age of the qualifications. The aim was therefore to carry out a transversal analysis and to come up with a series of general recommendations, which does not rule out any potential special provisions;
- an approach aimed at finding a balance between the incorporation of a European tool and the preservation of specific national characteristics: the aim of the MEN-ECVET project was to facilitate the implementation of the ECVET system whilst maintaining the foundations and specific characteristics of the French vocational diplomas;
- dividing the work into three key phases with the aim of examining the compatibility of the baccalauréats professionnels with the specifications of the European ECVET recommendation. These phases successively focused on the writing of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes, on the conditions governing the transfer of learning outcomes obtained elsewhere, and on the allocation and use of 'points';
- work incorporating various tasks: a documentary analysis supported by the reference texts on which the ECVET system and vocational diplomas are based (European ECVET recommendation, French rules governing vocational diplomas, documents forming part of each of the qualifications selected for the project, etc.), an analysis of previous experi-

mental projects, simulations and tests, the production of reports, etc.

- work alternating qualification by qualification analyses, pooling and transversal reflection, and discussions with the scientific committee which shared its external perspective and its concerns;
- a project based on partnership: the project was led and implemented by the ministry of Education with experts from the Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Scolaire (Directorate General for Schools) and regional and general inspectors, the CIEP, being the legal promoter of the project, and a scientific committee including French and European partners. This collaboration was indeed one of the keys to the project's success.



# The three phases of the MEN-ECVET project

## Are vocational diplomas designed in a way that is legible and compatible with regard to the European ECVET recommendation?

**By Martine Paty, in charge of European matters related to vocational training – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for Schools DGESCO)**

The first phase of the work, which ran from April to November 2011, focused on examining the compatibility of the baccalauréats professionnels with the technical specifications of the European ECVET recommendation.

In practical terms, this involved the creation of five working groups, each dedicated to one of the baccalauréats professionnels selected for closer examination as part of the study. The components of each of these diplomas were examined from all angles and compared with both the terms of the national standard (Code de l'Éducation and the national guide to the design of vocational diplomas) and the terms of the European ECVET recommendation. The objective was to identify those aspects of each of the diplomas, as they currently stand, that coincide with or differ from the ECVET recommendation, and unearth the source of such differences: do they stem from the French rules? Are they due to an incorrect interpretation of the French rules and/or of the recommendation?

The results of these analyses focused on the general structure of the baccalauréats professionnels and on their three main components, namely the 'professional activities standard', the 'certification standard' and the 'terms of certification'. These results revealed the following:

French vocational diplomas are structured around two central elements and are compatible with the

European ECVET recommendation.

The design of French vocational diplomas based on activities and skills is compatible with the European ECVET recommendation, although the latter does not refer specifically to 'activities'.

With this in mind, the two standards relating respectively to activities and to certification are essential to bringing structure to vocational qualifications/diplomas:

- the professional activities standard has a three-pronged role to play in that it guarantees the legitimacy of vocational qualifications in the eyes of French employers and employees by outlining the tasks included in the activities covered by the qualification, it represents a common language for discussion between all players in the vocational training and certification sectors at both national and transnational levels, and it provides a practical reference for assessing the skills acquired.
- likewise, the certification standard, which identifies the specific skills that the graduate will be expected to have acquired and which will then be assessed, is essential to defining the subject of the certification.

The French approach considers competency to be a combination of knowledge, expertise and, if appropriate, social skills, or rather professional behaviour used in a professional context. As a result, what will actually be assessed is a combination of these three elements applied in a contextual professional situation. This combinatorial approach to competency appears to be compatible with the terms of the ECVET recommendation (knowledge, skills and competence), with which bridges will need to be established.

The design of French vocational diplomas is based on a series of basic principles that closely resemble those outlined in the European recommendation.

Analysis of the vocational diplomas has in fact shown that they include units that correspond to the technical specifications of the European ECVET recommendation. These units are designed and organised in a way that is coherent with the overall qualification and that enables them to be assessed and validated. The standards specify the general title of each unit, the skills and knowledge ('learning

outcomes') covered and the assessment procedures and criteria. As a result, we concluded that our qualifications are effectively written in terms of 'units of learning outcomes', it being understood that learning is not necessarily formal (as specified in the European recommendation) and that our notion of competency is combinatorial.

It is, however, necessary to clarify certain concepts, eliminate 'parasitic terms' and make the conditions and criteria on which the units are assessed more legible.

We noted that it was important to clarify a number of aspects: the definitions of concepts such as activities, tasks, skills, etc., for example, need to be revised and/or expanded upon since certain qualifications feature versions of these concepts that are not clearly defined and thus make them more complicated to read (sub-skills, abilities, etc.). Likewise, it would be advisable to clarify the distinction between 'test' and 'unit'.

'Parasitic' terms and considerations, such as those relating to learning schemes for example, that have gradually made the standards more complex, should also be withdrawn.

There is one question that arises from this issue: should we then standardise concepts in a glossary?

Furthermore, it would appear necessary to pay particular attention to the description of assessment terms and criteria, since these elements are of particular importance from the perspective of delegating assessment to foreign partners.

## **How can an assessment system aimed at certification be implemented abroad? And how could the transfer and recognition of the assessed outcomes then be arranged, within the certification process?**

**By Martine Paty, in charge of European matters related to vocational training – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for Schools DGESCO), Jean-Pierre Collignon, Inspector-General for the French Ministry of Education (Industrial Sciences and Technologies group), and Didier Michel, Inspector-General for the French Ministry of Education (Management and Economics group)**

The second phase of the work, which ran from January to September 2012, was aimed at comparing the principles of the European ECVET recommendation with the French principles regarding, in particular, assessment, validation and certification, with a view to identifying a way of transferring 'learning outcomes assessed during transnational mobility periods'.

The work was carried out in several stages, the first of these being a series of hearings that led to an analysis of five European pilot projects (selected following the 2008 ECVET call for proposals) that had trialled the ECVET principles in actual cases of mobility (for French Ministry of Education qualifications, corresponding to various levels and various sectors). The MEN-ECVET groups then set about developing a series of foreign certification assessment scenarios. Finally, consideration was given to

the identification of the essential elements that had to feature in the documentation, such as memorandum of understanding and learning agreement.

### From the analysis of experimental projects...

The hearings relating to the five pilot projects, together with the analysis of the latter, brought to light the following observations:

Assessment carried out abroad for the purposes of certification is possible but...

- is difficult to implement due to regulatory constraints (none of the units correspond exactly to what the individual is likely to learn as a result of a short period of time spent abroad) and constraints relating to the working method adopted between partners (the principle of reciprocity requires an agreement to be reached with regards to a specified period of mobility and common training programmes);
- does not eliminate the need to deal with all matters associated with a period of mobility, namely the search for funding, the human resources required, language requirements, the need to coordinate periods of mobility with the course itself, the need to identify the responsibilities of each of the parties concerned, the need to take into consideration differences in employment law, problems of motivation and learners,' fears of being 'more stringently' assessed in a foreign context, etc.;
- is possible with 'parts of units' but requires specific dialogue tools to be developed.
- There are also various facilitating factors at play:
  - mobility practices are already widespread in the world of vocational training, thus avoiding the need to 'start from scratch';
  - the French system also contains a number of facilitative characteristics, including qualification standards identifying the 'activities' and 'tasks' the individual will be expected to be able to perform, which forms the basis of the dialogue between partners, and the existence of compulsory placements in the workplace: this compulsory period involves the partial delegation of assessment to professionals within the company in question, as a result of which the notion of delegating assessment to 'external' assessors already exists;
  - the need to prepare learners, to schedule these periods and the duration thereof and to be transparent with regards to the procedures and expectations for such periods has also been highlighted;
  - a number of tools designed to facilitate such transparency, such as standard assessment grids, company-training centre liaison files, learning agreement templates, etc., already exist and can be adapted.

### ...to the development of a series of certification assessment scenarios

#### Scenario 1: assessment abroad for compulsory baccalauréat professionnel units

One initial type of exercise involved looking at whether it was possible, for each of the selected baccalauréats professionnels, to identify elements that could be assessed abroad and incorporated into the awarding of a baccalauréat professionnel. It was also requested that the necessary educational tools for integrating assessments carried out abroad into existing baccalauréat professionnel units be designed and identified.

The work showed that it was indeed possible to integrate learning outcomes obtained and assessed abroad into the overall certification in the cases of all five of the diplomas examined.

The organisational conditions at play, however, are difficult to implement : since none of the units correspond exactly to what the individual is likely to learn as a result of a shorter medium-term period of learning in another country, in most cases it is advisable to accept assessment of a few aspects of the qualification that require restructuring and reformulating. In any case, assessment carried out abroad for the purposes of certification can be based on the incorporation of an assessment situation as part of the individual's 'ongoing assessment'.

Furthermore, the creation of specific dialogue tools and consequent partnership-based preparatory work are required both within the training center, with the learners concerned and with foreign partners. This preparatory work could be based on liaison documents, an explanation of what the baccalauréat professionnel is, the translation of dialogue documents into the language of the host country, etc.

It is important to emphasise that European network-based professional organisations which are used to dealing with training establishments and their European partners may prove to be valuable facilitators.

#### Scenario 2: introduction of an optional 'mobility' unit enabling the individual to have their cultural and vocational learning outcomes recognised

The second exercise involved creating an optional specific 'mobility' unit that would be added to the compulsory units of the baccalauréat professionnel.

Work was initially carried out on a group-by-group basis, with further reflection resulting in the conception of an interdisciplinary unit that would apply to all baccalauréats professionnels.

This unit could be used to validate any cultural and vocational learning outcomes that enrich but are not essential to the awarding of the qualification. The advantage of such a unit is that it would

not penalise learners (no optional unit can penalise a candidate with regards to the awarding of a qualification) but on the contrary would help recognise the experience they have acquired. This optional unit could be quickly incorporated into a qualification and would be a very effective way of promoting national mobility.

In order to introduce this optional unit, work to formalise the specific learning outcomes skills to be acquired during the period of mobility began, and a framework of reference consequently drawn up, together with an assessment and validation procedure that had to be straightforward but secure. One option might then be to carry out an assessment abroad based on a grid provided, followed by an assessment upon return in the form of an oral presentation.

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#### SNIPPETS FROM THE DISCUSSION

**«The European ECVET recommendation refers to a tool known as a memorandum of understanding. Do you anticipate there being centrally-determined partnership agreements or rather a list of criteria (that might be referred to as «quality criteria») that must be met?»**

*«There are examples of both partnership agreements and of other tools at European level. These examples need to be adapted to the different contexts, particularly given that the ECVET system is implemented in different ways by different countries. As part of the MEN-ECVET project we gave a good deal of consideration to a series of essential aspects that should feature in this type of document. It is also the second hypothesis that will be prioritised.»*

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#### SNIPPETS FROM THE DISCUSSION

**«With regards to the optional mobility unit, has the group thought about how cultural learning outcomes would be assessed? It is, after all, difficult to imagine asking the company to assess these cultural aspects.»**

*«Cultural learning outcomes will not be assessed abroad but will be judged based on an oral presentation given in France, with the aim of assessing the learner's ability to distance themselves from their own environment, interpret differences and use this experience as a form of enrichment.»*

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#### SNIPPETS FROM THE DISCUSSION

**«What link do you foresee with the Europass tool in the framework of ECVET mobility?»**

*«As far as we are concerned, the link with Europass is obvious; it is intended to be used to keep a record of mobility, but Europass is not a certification tool. Furthermore, we are careful not to increase the number of tools and systems used but rather to identify what already exists and seek out complementary aspects.»*

## Might it be possible to allocate ECVET points for vocational diplomas, and if so, using what method(s) and for what purpose(s)?

**By Patrick Bet, Honorary Inspector for the French Ministry of Education Industrial Sciences and Technologies**

The third phase of the work was completed between September and December 2012 and aimed to examine to what extent it would be feasible to allocate ECVET points for vocational diplomas. In practical terms, this involved developing a series of calculation hypotheses for the awarding of ECVET points for baccalauréats professionnels and their component units, and examining the pros and cons of such hypotheses. An analysis of the ECVET recommendation was carried out beforehand.

It should be borne in mind that the ECVET recommendation states the following with regards to ECVET points:

- 'ECVET points' constitute "a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification";
- these 'ECVET points' should not be confused with the notion of "credit for learning outcomes", which relates to "a set of learning outcomes of an individual which have been assessed...";
- "ECVET points provide complementary information about qualifications and units in numerical form";
- conventionally, "60 points are allocated to the learning outcomes expected to be achieved in a year of formal full time VET".

Having examined the way in which the French

system uses the points and processes the results of assessments and the relative weights of the units from all angles, two calculation hypotheses for the allocation of ECVET points for baccalauréats professionnels and their component units were looked at in greater detail:

The first hypothesis involved using training timetables in an academic context, and therefore the duration of teaching.

Teaching durations and breakdowns are not featured in the frameworks for vocational qualifications, which specify only the skills and knowledge the individual is expected to have acquired by the time they successfully complete the qualification. There are, however, national timetables for the basic vocational training provided to pupils at vocational high schools (*lycées professionnels*).

Based on these timetables, proposals for the breaking down of courses into ECVET points were put forward. This method of calculation has both pros and cons:

On the one hand, this method makes it possible to establish consistent proposals for all the baccalauréats professionnels, whatever the sector covered.

On the other hand, this method does not allow for points to be allocated to each vocational unit, with the possibility of several units falling within the scope of the same teaching area. First and foremost, it is paradoxical to use time allocations as a basis on which to allocate ECVET points, whilst the units in the French system are not training units as such but rather certification units listing the skills and knowledge the individual is required to master independently of the conditions of learning and the duration of teaching.

The second hypothesis involved using coefficients associated with baccalauréat professionnel units which determine the relative weight of the units.

All of the units that make up a baccalauréat professionnel have a relative weight that is expressed in regulatory terms as a specific multiplying coefficient for each unit; this can be transposed into French points. These coefficients feature in all examination regulations and indicate the significance of the units both in relation to one another and in relation to the qualification as a whole; they are used to weight candidates' results in assessments, with each assessment marked out of 20 points and the marks then multiplied by the appropriate coefficients, which range from 1 to 10.

Based on these coefficients, proposals for the breaking down of units into ECVET points were put forward for the baccalauréat qualifications selected for the purposes of the project. This method of calculation also has both pros and cons:

Since all compulsory baccalauréat professionnel units, both vocational and general, have an explicit relative weight, the conversion into ECVET points is a simple one and this closely resembles the ECVET points approach.

The main drawback, however, stems from the fact that the total of the coefficients is not identical for all baccalauréats professionnels since the coefficients of vocational units vary from one specific diploma to another. This results in variations in the number of ECVET points allocated for general units between one baccalauréat professionnel and the next, despite the fact that these units are common to all baccalauréats.

The work concluded that the coefficient-based method of calculation seemed more relevant with regards to the allocation of ECVET points than the method based on timetables and the duration of teaching. The potential for ECVET points to be added to our vocational diplomas, however, raises the following concerns:

- ECVET points would be added to the French points, which would only complicate matters. We, in France, use points on the one hand to express the relative weight of the various units in relation to the qualification as a whole, and on the other hand to determine the results of assessments. In this respect, ECVET points would be added to the existing points system, which will fail to simplify the interpretation and understanding of the qualification for either learners or educational teams and could even mislead learners (confusion regarding marking);
- concerning the relative weight of the units, French examination regulations refer only to coefficients; in terms of legibility for both organisations and learners, stating their equivalent in French points would undoubtedly provide a clearer picture and improve the transparency and legibility of these relative weights, both in France and abroad.

# Recommendations and prospects

## Recommendations and prospects

**By Maryannick Malicot, head of the Vocational diplomas department – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for Schools – DGESCO)**

### 1. Proposals for the structure and writing of vocational diplomas

Firstly, when it comes to writing qualifications, it is important to remain loyal to the appropriate reference tools (general regulations for the baccalauréat professionnel, stated in the Code de l'Éducation and the guide for the design of vocational diplomas), without seeking to make them more complex.

We have consequently come up with the following proposals:

#### Maintaining two separate standards

The structuring of our vocational qualifications should continue to comprise two separate standards: a professional activities standard and a certification standard.

The professional activities standard facilitates dialogue with foreign partners, based on the actual practice of the professions in question. It is proposed that this be broken down into two parts:

- the first outlining the overall vocational aim (that is the activities performed within companies, the type of positions held there and the major functions that they involve),
- the second consisting of a detailed description of the activities and the conditions under which said activities are performed in a professional environment.

With regards to the certification standard, this remains a source of reference in that it provides a solution to one key question: what skills should the individual be able to demonstrate in order to go on to successfully obtain the qualification? With this in mind, this, too, would be broken down into two main parts.

The first of these would include an introduction to the skills required to perform the appropriate activities, outlined from a combinatorial perspective since the skill that is applied in performing the activity in fact comprises several different aspects. These aspects could correspond, in our terms, to knowledge (theoretical knowledge), expertise (knowledge that is put into practice, applied in practical situations, observable and, I would say, objectivised within the context of the activity in question) and interpersonal skills (the professional behaviour and attitude required to perform the role).

The second part would include a detailed description of the assessment conditions.

#### Limiting the maximum number of units

The general regulations governing the baccalauréat professionnel feature the terms 'test' and 'unit'. Although the general regulations specify a maximum number of tests (seven), the candidate finds themselves faced with assessment situations corresponding to 14 or 16 units. Which elements get validated at the end of the day? In order to avoid any confusion, we would recommend making the unit the reference and limiting the number thereof.

### 2. Proposals relating to points, that is determining the relative weights of units in relation to the qualification as a whole

#### Facilitating the reading of coefficients and therefore of the relative weights of units

It is difficult to identify a formal solution to incorporating ECVET points into a set of examination regulations which already refer to the coefficients associated with each unit and are based on the French points system.

It would, however, be possible to improve the legibility of the way these regulations are presented and the points allocated in accordance with unit coefficients. This would help bring French practices in line with the European recommendation without obliging us to add ECVET points to the current regulations which already include a points system.

### 3. Proposals for assessment carried out abroad for the purposes of certification

Making it possible, in regulatory terms, to create assessment situations abroad as part of a compulsory unit and of an optional mobility unit (optional)

It is important to incorporate into the regulations the possibility of carrying out assessments abroad for the purposes of certification. This will require the general decree regarding baccalauréats professionnels to be modified and special decrees to be produced.

On the one hand, the possibility of creating assessment situations abroad, as part of a compulsory unit, will need to be made possible in regulatory terms, in other words the recognition of existing assessment practices by foreign partners in the case of learners receiving education or training in a foreign country, whether within a business or at a training establishment. In this respect, it is important to establish what types of people might be considered legitimate assessors.

On the other hand, there is also the need to develop the optional mobility unit, which will apply to all baccalauréats professionnels and will cover both professional and general skills relating to finding one's feet in the world of work and cultural learning experiences for those on mobility. Finally, the regulations should allow for the possibility for learners to take two optional units rather than just one.

#### Creating tools and providing support

Along with the regulatory aspects, the documents that will enable such mobility initiatives to be arranged will need to be prepared and support provided for regional education authorities (information and training) with regards to the undertaking of

periods of mobility for the purposes of certification. Our ECVET expert connected to the Europe Éducation Formation France agency (Lifelong Learning Programme national agency) will be involved in this phase.

### 4. Summary

The proposals put forward will form our roadmap. We now have to complete the following steps:

- defining the regulatory framework that will make it easier to recognise learning outcomes obtained on mobility; we are therefore in the process of finalising the statutory texts that will make mobility initiatives 'for the purposes of certification' a distinct possibility with regards to the compulsory units of a qualification and will create the optional unit referred to above. The texts will gradually be submitted to the advisory bodies. The first stage will concern the optional mobility unit: the decree by which the unit is created, together with any appendices relating to the framework and to the terms of assessment will be outlined over the course of the second half of 2013;
- supporting regional education authorities in the implementation of mobility initiatives for the purposes of certification, including information and training for regional education authorities and the production of the appropriate tools;
- revising our guide for the design of vocational diplomas, drawing on all of the proposals formulated;
- preparing for the assessment of the recommendation in light of the lessons learnt from the project.



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#### SNIPPETS FROM THE DISCUSSION

**«We seem to be looking at mobility in the framework of work placements in business, but some foreign training centres have workshops and can therefore provide a realistic working environment for training and assessment. Will regulatory developments take both types of host establishment into account?»**

*«Of course, periods of mobility can also be spent at training centres. The regulatory developments that will make it possible to undertake periods of mobility (for the purposes of certification) will include both types of establishment, both businesses and training centres.»*

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#### SNIPPETS FROM THE DISCUSSION

**«Will the regulatory developments that make it possible to carry out an assessment abroad for the purposes of certification with regards to compulsory units include specified minimum durations for periods spent abroad? A 3-week period of mobility may not be long enough to assess and validate a «whole» compulsory unit. If, on the other hand, a mobility period of 6 months is planned and the cross-border partner is able to assess a unit in its entirety, it might in fine be possible to validate the whole unit.»**

**«Regulatory developments will not include any indication of the required duration of periods of training undertaken abroad. They will, however, make it possible for all or part of a compulsory unit to be assessed abroad for the purposes of certification.**

*It will therefore be possible, in regulatory terms, to plan a six-month vocational work placement period in another country. Having said that, the teaching provided in vocational high schools and training centres is based on continuous interrelations between general and vocational teachers, who feed off one another. Vocational and general skills and knowledge are acquired simultaneously. The outcome of an exclusively vocational work placement would represent a break away from this teaching model in favour of a model that more closely resembles that of higher education based on the successive completion of a series of strictly compartmentalised modules.»*

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#### SNIPPETS FROM THE DISCUSSION

**«With regards to the regulations, you are going to propose a number of developments and in particular the creation of an optional mobility unit for the baccalauréat professionnel. Could this unit be available with other French Ministry of Education qualifications in the future?»**

*«It is too early to say. For a start, the baccalauréat professionnel was chosen for the introduction of this optional unit because it is the main vocational secondary education qualification and therefore concerns the largest number of candidates. Furthermore, the duration of the training delivered through initial education leading to the baccalauréat professionnel, i.e. three years, facilitates in educational terms the organisation of a period of mobility. This organisation becomes more complex with the CAP, where the initial vocational training programme lasts two years and immediately follows the individual's completion of their lower secondary education (collège).*

*As a result, the unit will initially be available with the baccalauréat professionnel only. The possibility of extending it to other qualifications will be examined at a later stage.»*

## Alternative perspectives: round table

**Round table discussion led by Brigitte Trocmé, assistant head of Vocational diplomas department – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for Schools – DGESCO). Member of the European ECVET users' group.**

**With the participation of:**  
**Isabel Prat, Department of Education of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, Maryse Descamps, Centre for the Coordination and Management of European Programmes – Unit-Based Certification (CPU) division, Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Jean-Lin Chaix, 'Centre for research on education, training and employment' (Cereq), France, Thierry-Olivier Gascard, CCI France and member of the European ECVET users' group.**

**Questions put to Thierry-Olivier Gascard, CCI France and member of the European ECVET users' group:**

**Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) provide training, they also design and award vocational qualifications. How do you intend to take on board the results of the MENECEVET project with regards to these two spheres? Might the project be of use to your own vocational qualifications?**

Nowadays, 80% of the qualifications for which chambers of commerce provide training are Ministry of Education diplomas, and baccalauréats professionnels in particular. The prospects that have emerged as a result of the project are of great interest to us, not least as a certifying body. I would suggest that as both a certifying body and a training provider we try out your recommendations on a baccalauréat professionnel and on a chambers qualification, which could lead to our modifying our own qualifications with the aim of providing a legible French response to any European partner that might consult us.

Will 'ECVET' mobility initiatives offer any added value in relation to the transnational mobility initiatives in which learners at chambers training centres are currently involved?

CCI France is piloting a European project that has helped get some 2,500 learners, both apprentices and post-apprentices, involved in mobility initiatives since 2007. We are not convinced that ECVET

will be either applicable to or indeed necessary for all young people. Mobility periods for young people currently last 2 or 3 weeks. Will apprentice training centres be able to raise the necessary human and financial resources to implement a system such as ECVET over such short time frames? Organising sandwich courses between apprentice training centres and businesses leaves little margin when it comes to increasing the duration of mobility periods.

Having said that, the regulatory developments announced by the Ministry of Education will make it possible to take into account the fact that European mobility can be recognised and counted towards the completion of a qualification, which will in turn help to promote it.

You are a member of the European Commission's 'European ECVET users' group' in the framework of economic affairs. In your opinion, is the ECVET system of interest to the world of economics?

At the moment, it is difficult to convey the benefits of the ECVET system, but things can change. Once again, the issue of the duration of transnational mobility periods among learners undergoing vocational training is an obstacle since the economic return with short-term periods of mobility is poor. ECVET trials have nevertheless been carried out in certain sectors of industry, such as the automotive sector, for example.

**Questions put to Maryse Descamps, Centre for the Coordination and Management of European Programmes – Unit-Based Certification (CPU) division, Wallonia-Brussels Federation:**

**Unlike the MEN-ECVET project, which helped examine the use of the ECVET system from a transnational mobility perspective, you have considered the ECVET system from a national perspective, which has resulted in a reform of the basic vocational training system. What effects has the ECVET system had on your own system?**

To start with, I'd like to quote our Cypriot colleague who is active within the ECVET network: "If we want to sell the European ECVET recommendation to entrepreneurs, businesses and politicians, we need not talk about the recommendation itself but rather identify what this tool will be able to contribute to the system. If we are dealing with a minister, we have to identify what the tool will contribute to what the minister does....". In our case, the minister responsible for qualification-oriented education and social advancement (aimed at adults) realised that ECVET could provide something of a solution to the urgent need to train future professionals to achieve profiles that were much sought-after among businesses.

The minister also wanted to restructure the qualification-oriented vocational education sector and reverse the trend whereby those undergoing qualification-oriented vocational training tend to be young people who fail to achieve at school. The minister also wanted to reduce the number of pupils dropping out of school whilst maintaining the quality of the training provided. She wanted to embrace the notion of units featured in the ECVET recommendation and enable students to obtain a qualification through the gradual accumulation of a series of units as a way of motivating young people, meaning that if a young person drops out at a particular point in their training, they will be able to return to training at a later stage, even at another training centre, to add to the units already completed.

### **How has this restructuring affected the various players involved?**

It has affected different players in different ways. Teachers, for example, found it difficult to implement in practice and feared they would be exploited if they complied too readily with the demands of businesses.

The young people we interviewed, however, responded as follows: “They didn’t really explain what ECVET was, we don’t really know what it involves, but they are certainly taking care of us, helping us to overcome difficulties and better understand what we have to do, which makes us more likely to succeed”.

This reform has been in the process of being trialled for the past two years and we have already received some positive feedback.

In terms of procedure, it should be noted that all of the players involved (inspectorate, administration, training establishment networks, etc.) came to the table in what has proven to be a truly bottom-up approach.

### **Questions put to Isabel Prat, Department of Education of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia:**

#### **What is happening with the ECVET system in Catalonia?**

The ECVET system is used at various levels in Catalonia, to recognise learning outcomes across qualifications both of the same level and of different levels, to recognise knowledge and skills obtained as a result of non-formal and informal learning schemes, and to recognise the learning outcomes of international mobility programmes.

The basic vocational education and training system implemented in Catalonia very closely resembles that outlined in the ECVET recommendation and is a permeable and flexible system structured into a series of units and modules. It is also possible to accumulate learning outcomes and we

are currently working on improving the relationship between the training provided in upper secondary schools and that provided in the world of business as part of sandwich courses.

Furthermore, the Catalan economy, which continues to withstand the crisis, is based on SMEs and SMIs who need skilled people in various sectors. Indeed, new qualifications are in the process of being developed at both regional and national levels with the aim of developing and extending the range of options for professional integration.

Work is currently under way on a project run by the NETINVET network. Launched in 2011, the project helps promote European mobility in the international trade, transport and logistics sector and has enabled us to develop mobility opportunities involving training centres rather than just businesses. This stage of the project saw us collaborate with upper secondary schools (lycées) in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

### **Does a young Catalan student undergoing training in the international trade sector and embarking upon a period of mobility in Europe currently have any chance of seeing their experience recognised in their qualification?**

Yes, this is already a possibility as part of the trial we have been implementing, with a learning agreement allowing for learning outcomes assessed abroad to be recognised.

### **Question put to Jean-Lin Chaix, Centre for research on education, training and employment (Cereq), France:**

#### **We’ve heard today of various different types of mobility scheme and various ECVET approaches, as a result of which some sort of common language appears to be emerging. How can the different initiatives we have heard of be put into perspective?**

One of the major advantages of the MEN-ECVET project is that it has taken us ‘to the heart of the reactor’, that is to the heart of the qualifications themselves, incorporating an approach that sees the current situation compared with those of Germany, French-speaking Belgium and Catalonia. Meticulous analytical work has brought us face to face with various concepts that are used in different ways from one country to another.

This project, together with the other initiatives presented here today, has identified the various potential aims of using the ECVET system and of mobility. The aim expressed in the MEN-ECVET project is to improve the quality of transnational mobility, that is to establish a system of trust both between institutions and between countries. According to the literature, a system of trust

requires a recognised certifying body, a standardised framework and objective measurement criteria, all of which the MEN-ECVET project has.

An analysis of the MEN-ECVET project, however, reveals other aims, notably improving the relationship between the academic world and the professional world.

In this respect, such links are currently very strong in France, although the ECVET system could further strengthen these relationships; trials analysed over the course of the MEN-ECVET project often resulted in the creation of a partnership between tutors/teachers from foreign academic and business sectors, particularly with regards to assessment. This configuration would appear particularly appropriate here since it encourages a regular meeting and consequent mutual enrichment of the two worlds.

With regards to mobility, the various examples of 'ECVET' projects illustrate the multiple aims both of using the ECVET system and of mobility in general and show that formative mobility is not an end in itself. In this respect, some formative mobility schemes can be undertaken as part of a cross-border vocational mobility approach.

Certain mobility schemes can also be adopted as part of learning and education initiatives in the wider sense. Mobility can be used, for example, to 'win back' those that have dropped out with different and enriching forms of teaching. Indeed, certain systems assimilate mobility with an achievement, something of a 'bonus' in the quest for excellence. In the Aerovet project, for example, the aim was to answer the specific needs of a transnational sector (aeronautics).

All of these examples show that the conditions selected for the implementation of the ECVET system must be open enough to be able to meet the various aims of mobility.

The recommendations resulting from the MEN-ECVET project have this open nature, incorporating, for example, the potential for introducing an optional component that would be added to the qualification.

I will conclude by saying that the advantages of MEN-ECVET lie largely in the flexibility of the system put in place. Too stringent a system would not be used at local level and too lenient a system would not allow for learning outcomes to be recognised. MEN-ECVET was concerned with finding a stringent system that was also open.



# The use of the ECVET system in Europe: illustrations

## National approaches to implementing the ECVET system,

**By Daniela Ulicna, GHK consultant to the European Commission**

E2014 will see the launch of a European assessment of what has happened since the ECVET recommendation was adopted in 2009. Only then will we be in a position to really appreciate the effect this tool has had on national systems. There follows, nevertheless, an initial insight into the ways in which several different countries have adopted the recommendation.

There are a few things that should be stressed beforehand; firstly, the ECVET recommendation is not a 'system' as such, but rather a conceptual framework. On top of this, the vocational training systems that currently exist within the European Union are very diverse, resulting in major differences with regards to the existence, or indeed absence, of technical specificities in the European recommendation, major differences in the degree of independence enjoyed by training centres, differences in terms of political options, needs, etc. As a result, the ECVET conceptual framework is used in different ways depending on the national context. There follow a few examples of this (selected based on pilot projects conducted and on the follow-up work carried out by the Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)).

### The example of French-speaking Belgium

French-speaking Belgium has adopted ECVET in order to rather profoundly reform its initial vocational training system. This reform is intended to reduce the number of pupils dropping out of school and reduce school failure rates by enabling young people to obtain a qualification through the gradual accumulation of units.

Prior to the reform, qualifications were not comprised of units of learning outcomes and there was no option for learners to gradually accumulate learning outcomes towards their qualification; there was simply a series of training programmes and an examination at the end of them. Training centres also had a great deal of independence, particularly with

regards to developing training plans, choices relating to examinations, choices relating to the validation and recognition of the knowledge and skills obtained, etc. The current reform should enable learners to obtain a qualification by gradually accumulating units and also establish a series of coherent national certification standards that apply to all establishments. The reform has been in the process of being trialled for the past two years and an inspection report has already testified to its positive effects.

### The example of Finland

Finland's main reason for using 'the ECVET conceptual framework' is geographical mobility. Qualifications in Finland are already broken down into a series of units, which are assessed at staggered intervals. Training centres have a great deal of independence when it comes to the validation and recognition of each of these units and there are also standards and frames of reference that schools adapt, with a great deal of flexibility in terms of training provision and certification. The aim is now to share criteria and tools with these training centres.

Finland also uses a points system similar to ECVET points. The plan is therefore to incorporate the use of ECVET points into the regulations in 2014. Consideration is currently being given to the field of continuing vocational training.

### The example of Germany

Vocational training system qualifications in Germany are not broken down into units and the learning outcomes are assessed by means of a final examination. Reflection on the introduction of ECVET focuses on the way in which the ECVET technical specifications relating to units could enable greater permeability with the dual system: alongside this dual system there is in fact a 'preparatory' training system aimed primarily at those young people that find themselves unable to find a place in the dual system. The training provided for these young people is rather school-like but also incorporates certain vocational skills. How could units be used to facilitate

the recognition of learning outcomes obtained in the preparatory system and help reduce the training duration within the dual system? Current reflection is centred around this issue and the work carried out is being tested at federal level.

### The example of Italy

In Italy, there are various avenues of reflection regarding ECVET, which notably include one that falls within a wider context and is aimed at encouraging access to certification for adults. With regards to continuing vocational training, there are currently a very wide variety of qualifications on offer, with the regions being highly independent in this respect. Ongoing reforms aim to establish more coherent and consistent ways of recognising and validating adult learning outcomes. At the same time, a national qualifications framework is in the process of being developed. There are therefore various initiatives under way as part of a cross-disciplinary desire to standardise practices. Certain initiatives relating to the use of the ECVET recommendation, and indeed the tools to which it refers, fall within this context.

### The example of Malta

Work relating to the ECVET has been fully integrated with the work conducted on the national qualifications framework. As a result, any qualification listed in the Maltese qualifications framework must now be made up of a series of units and involve the awarding of points.

These examples show that the degrees of compatibility between the ECVET conceptual framework and national systems vary greatly and that objectives and comparison scenarios also differ (although the use of

ECTS also varies from one country to another, and even within the same university in some cases).

We might conclude by saying that the ECVET recommendation is first and foremost a tool for bringing structure to the certification process, although the structuring of qualifications into units will also have an effect on the way in which training is organised. Furthermore, lots of countries are questioning how training centres are going to develop their practices in accordance with this structuring, a task which is looking like being a hefty one.

There is also a noticeable trend for looking at ECVET in relation to matters concerning units, points and fundamental principles relating to certification only. This approach neglects the consideration of the practical tools (memorandum of understanding, learning agreement), which will, nevertheless, be used by teachers and pupils. Should we be providing models? Can we agree on the minimum criteria? These are questions that keep coming up but are yet to be answered.

Finally, let us not forget that beyond the diversity of national systems, the primary aim with the ECVET system was to facilitate mutual comprehension between countries. In this respect, it has become clear that despite the odd difference, countries seem gradually to be reaching an agreement with regards to the meaning of the concepts and the conditions under which they should be implemented. In this respect, ECVET will have encouraged decederation and an openness to others. The French Ministry of Education, for example, together with ECVET, has been led to wonder how its vocational diplomas standards are read and interpreted by foreigners and to question their clarity.



# Conclusions

**By Maryannick Malicot, head of the Vocational diplomas department – French Ministry of Education, Deputy-direction for upper secondary education and lifelong vocational training (Directorate General for Schools – DGESCO)**

It doesn't say much for our modesty, but I would like to begin by saying just how happy we are to have completed such an ambitious project, the results of which correspond to what we had originally hoped to achieve. To put it in 'ECVET terms', the results obtained very closely reflect the results expected! However, the ministry owes this satisfaction to the efforts on the part of all of the players who contributed to the smooth running of the project.

I would therefore like to sincerely thank all those who put time, energy and enthusiasm into carrying out the various phases of the project.

I would particularly like to thank our European partners, whose perspectives and reactions contributed greatly to enlightening our debates and forced us to clarify our ideas. Thanks must also go to the General Inspectors who loyally supported the project and contributed their expertise and their thoughts. Last but not least, I would like to thank the inspectors from local education authorities and our colleagues from the Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Scolaire ('Directorate General for Schools'), who have put so much effort into every stage of the project.

What you were presented here today is the result of a collaboration conducted on an institutional but not hierarchical basis.

I would like to conclude by summarising what we have discovered or rediscovered as a result of the project:

- firstly, that the success of a project depends largely on the existence of a close connection with the activities of the organisation sponsoring it; the MEN-ECVET owes its success to the fact that it didn't involve our peripheral activities but instead got to the very heart of what we do as a competent authority responsible for developing and awarding vocational qualifications; we put ourselves at the heart of the sovereign authority of the ministry regarding the development of qualifications and the terms by which they are awarded;
- secondly, that the conditions surrounding questions relating to qualification, training and the validation of learning outcomes were virtually identical both in partner countries and between French certifying bodies. The answers to these questions may be different, but this does not have to present an obstacle to discussion and exchange since all vocational qualifications share a common basic language, namely that of vocational activities;
- finally, I would like to point out that this project has 'accelerated reflection' by enabling us to shift our focus and take a step back from our usual operational rules and habits and by confirming or refuting methodological and conceptual choices that had become obvious.

As I said this morning, the recommendations already summarised will now form our roadmap for progression and represent avenues for the modernisation of our vocational certification system, to which we are fully committed.

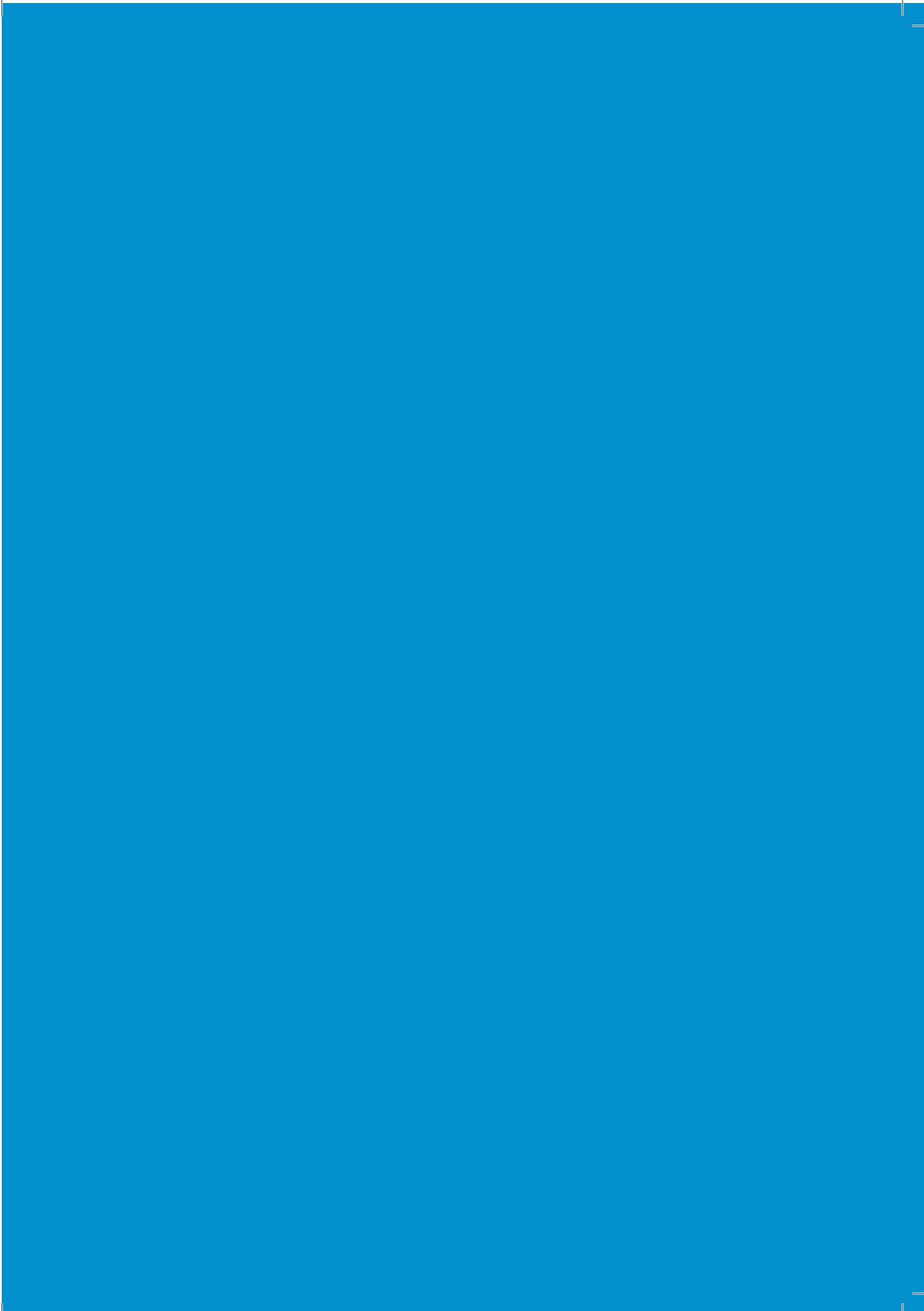
## The partners of the MEN-ECVET project

### Project managers

The French Ministry of Education and its Directorate General for Schools: this Directorate determines education and teaching policy and compiles primary and secondary school and vocational schools syllabuses.

- The Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques (CIEP): a government institution and benchmark operator for the ministries responsible for education and higher education with regards to international cooperation on matters relating to education.
- European partners
- The 'Centre for the Coordination and Management of European Programmes' is a body set up by the Ministry of Compulsory Education of the French Community of Belgium – the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.
- The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB): a German body under the administrative supervision of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), its missions relate to research into and the development of vocational training.
- The Department of Education of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia: the executive authority in Catalonia on matters relating to education as well as vocational training by means of the Department of Vocational, Artistic and Specialist Education.
- French associate partners
- The Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications, Cereq: the 'Centre for research on education, training and employment' is a national body under the administrative supervision of several ministries and public centre of expertise serving players in the training and employment sectors.
- The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Vocational Training and Social Dialogue: responsible for preparing and implementing government policy relating to labour, employment, vocational training, social dialogue and the prevention of accidents in the workplace and occupational diseases.
- CCI FRANCE: the national body responsible for uniting and coordinating Chambers of Commerce and Industry in France (this body succeeded the Assemblée des Chambres Françaises de Commerce et d'Industrie ('Assembly of French Chambers of Commerce and Industry') in 2012).

Content gathered by Clément Dupuis and Béatrice Weill ([www.kaleido-scop.com](http://www.kaleido-scop.com)).





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