

Procedure file

Basic information	
COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Recommendation	2008/0070(COD) Procedure completed
Vocational Education and Training, VET: European Credit system ECVET	
Subject 4.40.01 European area for education, training and lifelong learning 4.40.07 Recognition of diplomas, equivalence of studies and training 4.40.15 Vocational education and training	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		06/05/2008
		PPE-DE MANN Thomas	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	CULT Culture and Education (Associated committee)		22/05/2008
		PPE-DE OPREA Dumitru	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	2941	11/05/2009
	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	2868	21/05/2008
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	FIGEL' Ján	

Key events			
09/04/2008	Legislative proposal published	COM(2008)0180	Summary
24/04/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
21/05/2008	Debate in Council	2868	
19/06/2008	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
05/11/2008	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
07/11/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A6-0424/2008	
17/12/2008	Debate in Parliament		
18/12/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		

18/12/2008	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T6-0628/2008	Summary
11/05/2009	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's 1st reading		
18/06/2009	Final act signed		
18/06/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		
08/07/2009	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2008/0070(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Recommendation
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 149-p4; EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 150-p4
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/6/62098

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		COM(2008)0180	09/04/2008	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2008)0442	09/04/2008	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2008)0443	09/04/2008	EC	
Committee draft report		PE409.704	18/07/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE412.240	22/09/2008	EP	
Committee opinion	CULT	PE409.522	07/10/2008	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A6-0424/2008	07/11/2008	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T6-0628/2008	18/12/2008	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2009)402	29/01/2009	EC	
Draft final act		03747/2008/LEX	18/06/2009	CSL	

Additional information

National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act

[EP/Council Recommendation 2009/708](#)
[OJ C 155 08.07.2009, p. 0011](#) Summary

Vocational Education and Training, VET: European Credit system ECVET

PURPOSE: to establish the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

PROPOSED ACT: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: complexity and a lack of cooperation between different providers/authorities and between different national systems weaken the impact of vocational training in the EU. Vocational training is crucial for the EU's competitiveness and social cohesion. The lack of coherence also has the effect of making it difficult for citizens to move within the European Vocational Education and Training (VET) area and the European labour market and to pursue genuine lifelong learning without borders. One of the main obstacles to attracting more interest in transnational mobility as part of initial and continuing vocational training and education is the difficulty in identifying, validating and recognising learning outcomes acquired during a stay in another country. Furthermore lifelong learning is taking place increasingly in different countries and in a wide variety of contexts, formal, non-formal and informal.

In 2002, the Council emphasised that priority should be given to a system of credit transfer for Vocational education and training. In 2004, the European social partners agreed to give priority to the development and implementation of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). This ECVET proposal responds to the political mandate described above.

This ECVET proposal belongs to a series of European initiatives, including the European

Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), Europass (see [COD/2003/0307](#)), the European Quality Charter for Mobility (EQCM), the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) (see [COD/2006/0163](#)).

CONTENT: in order to enable EU citizens to pursue their learning pathway by building on their learning outcomes when moving from one learning context to another, and from one country to the other, it is necessary to find a system which offers an alternative to the diversity, even fragmentation of education, training and certification systems in Europe.

A large number of qualifications and of different competent institutions and actors may be involved.

In view of this diversity described above, common conventions and technical principles are required in order to ensure mutual trust and to enable the transfer and recognition of learning outcomes in the context of trans-national mobility.

In this context, the proposed Recommendation would commit the Member States to implement ECVET by 2012 on a voluntary basis. It establishes ECVET as a methodological framework that can be used to describe qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes with associated points.

In summary the main elements of the proposal are as follows:

- As a unit-based credit system, ECVET will contribute to developing and extending European cooperation in education and training. ECVET is based on the designing of coherent and meaningful units of learning outcomes and not on fragmentation of qualifications. ECVET does not aim for or require harmonisation of qualifications and VET systems; it aims instead for better comparability and compatibility. A unit-based approach supports flexible individual learning pathways, where learners can accumulate the required units of learning outcomes over time, in different countries, and in different learning modes. Its flexibility facilitates the process of organizing mobility experiences for VET learners. The ECVET principles and technical specifications are designed for use in a flexible but structured way. They will be further detailed in the ECVET users' guide.
- ECVET partnerships and networks: these shall involve competent institutions, authorities, social partners, sectors and providers are essential for the testing, development and broad implementation of ECVET. They create an environment in which mutual trust can be developed and provide a framework for ECVET credit transfer. The partnership will be formalised through an ECVET Memoranda of Understanding. In addition, proposed Learning Agreements will offer simple, convenient and systematic guidelines for practical implementation of credit transfer arrangements and procedures for an individual learner.
- ECVET points: these are attached to qualifications and units of learning outcomes. These are developed on the basis of common European conventions and, by enhancing the legibility of achieved learning outcomes they facilitate transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes achieved by a learner. The points provide information in terms of the overall weight of the learning outcomes required to achieve a qualification and allow the relative weight of each of its component units to be identified. As a convention, 60 points will be assigned to the learning outcomes expected to be achieved in a year of formal, full-time VET.
- Transferability: in ECVET, any credit obtained by a learner is an expression of the validity of his/her achieved learning outcomes. These are assessed and validated so that credit can be transferred from one VET qualifications system to another or from one learning context to another.
- Implementation: in order to create conditions for effective recognition and credit transfer processes, and thus promote mutual trust among the different actors, ECVET requires commitment to quality assurance criteria and procedures by all actors involved and at all the levels of the system. Implementation of ECVET should be a continuous process which requires the effective and sustainable commitment of competent institutions, authorities, social partners, sectors and providers, and will require a high degree of synergy between initiatives at the European, national and sectoral levels.
- Commission's tasks: the proposal invites the Commission to support Member States in carrying out the tasks set out in the recommendation and to develop an ECVET users' guide and tools. It is also required to establish a pilot ECVET users' group and to develop a European ECVET network in order to ensure the quality and overall coherence of the cooperation process for the implementation of ECVET. Moreover, the Commission will monitor and follow up the action taken in response to the Recommendation with a view to a possible review four years after its adoption.

Lastly, it should be noted that the recommendation includes two annexes containing the definitions and the main principles and technical specifications of the ECVET. This proposal is being presented alongside a related proposal on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training? (See [COD/2008/0069](#)).

Vocational Education and Training, VET: European Credit system ECVET

the proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). The committee highlights that ECVET is applicable at all levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The main amendments ? made in 1st reading of the codecision procedure ? are as follows :

A new recital notes that the introduction and implementation of ECVET is voluntary, and can therefore only be undertaken in accordance with existing national laws and regulations. This recommendation thus complies with the principle of subsidiarity by supporting and complementing the activities of Member States, facilitating cooperation between them, increasing transparency and promoting mobility and lifelong learning.

Recommendation 1 : Member States should promote the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training as set out in Annex 1 and 2 at all levels of the EQF in order to facilitate trans-national mobility and recognition of learning outcomes in vocational education and training and borderless lifelong learning;

Recommendation 2 : they should use ECVET, in particular by adopting measures for its testing, starting as soon as possible from 2012 onwards, and its gradual application to vocational education and training qualifications from level 1 to level 8 of the EQF.

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

Intention 3 : it should monitor the action taken, guaranteeing access to the guidance material for all interested citizens, and, after the assessment and evaluation of this action carried out and the tests conducted in cooperation with the Member States, report, five years after the adoption of this Recommendation, on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review and adaptation of a final Recommendation, involving the updating of the technical annexes and guidance material.

Lastly, it should be noted that this proposal is closely linked to the proposal on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (please see [COD/2008/0069](#)).

Vocational Education and Training, VET: European Credit system ECVET

The European Parliament adopted by 564 votes to 12 with 8 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending the proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Parliament highlights that ECVET is applicable at all levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Thomas MANN (EPP-ED, DE), on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. The amendments were the result of a compromise between the Council and the Parliament. The main amendments - adopted under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure - were as follows:

- the recital notes that ECVET intended to facilitate transfer, recognition and accumulation of assessed learning outcomes of individuals who are aiming to achieve a qualification. This will improve the general understanding of citizens' learning outcomes and their transparency, trans-national mobility and portability across and, where appropriate, within Member States in a borderless lifelong learning area, and will also improve the mobility and portability of qualifications at national level between various sectors of the economy and within the labour market; furthermore, it will contribute to the development and expansion of European cooperation in education and training. The introduction and implementation of ECVET is voluntary, and can therefore only be undertaken in accordance with existing national laws and regulations. This recommendation thus complies with the principle of subsidiarity by supporting and complementing the activities of Member States, facilitating cooperation between them, increasing transparency and promoting mobility and lifelong learning.

In addition, the Recommendation should facilitate the involvement of competent local and regional authorities in the exercise of linking national or other qualifications frameworks and systems to ECVET, where appropriate.

Recommendation 1 : Member States should promote the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training ("ECVET") as set out in Annexes 1 and 2 at all levels of the EQF with reference to VET qualifications, in order to facilitate trans-national mobility and the recognition of learning outcomes in vocational education and training and borderless lifelong learning;

Recommendation 2 : they should create the necessary conditions and adopt measures, as appropriate, so that as from 2012 - in accordance with national legislation and practice, and on the basis of experimentation and testing - ECVET can be gradually applied to vocational education and training qualifications at all levels of the EQF, and used for the purpose of the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes achieved in formal and, where appropriate, non-formal and informal contexts;

Recommendation 5 : they should apply, in accordance with national legislation and practice, the common principles for quality assurance in vocational education and training provided for in the Council conclusions of 28 May 2008 when using ECVET, particularly in relation to the assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes;

Member States endorse the Commission's intentions to :

Intention 3: promote, and participate together with the Member States in, a European ECVET network involving relevant vocational education and training stakeholders and national competent institutions for the purpose of disseminating and supporting ECVET within Member States and constituting a sustainable platform for the exchange of information and experience between Member States; and establish, from within this network, an ECVET users' group in order to contribute to the updating of the users' guide and to the quality and overall coherence of the cooperation process for the implementation of ECVET;

Intention 4: monitor and follow up the action taken, including the results of experimentation and testing, and, after the assessment and evaluation of this action carried out in cooperation with the Member States, report, five years after the adoption of this Recommendation, to the European Parliament and the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review and adaptation of this Recommendation, involving the updating of the technical Annexes and guidance material, in cooperation with the Member States.

Annex 2: Parliament made several amendments to the principles and technical specifications in Annex 2. It also noted that ECVET is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and, where appropriate, accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification. ECVET tools and methodology comprise the description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes with

associated points, a transfer and accumulation process and complementary documents such as learning agreements, transcripts of records and ECVET users' guides. It should be noted that ECVET does not entail any new entitlement for citizens to obtain the automatic recognition of either learning outcomes or points.

Lastly, it should be noted that this proposal is closely linked to the proposal on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (please see [COD/2008/0069](#)).

Vocational Education and Training, VET: European Credit system ECVET

PURPOSE: to establish the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

CONTENT: following a first reading agreement with the European Parliament, the Council adopted a Recommendation establishing a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training.

The ECVET intends to facilitate the transfer, recognition and accumulation of assessed learning outcomes of individuals who are aiming to achieve a qualification. This will improve the general understanding of citizens' learning outcomes and their transparency, transnational mobility and portability across and, where appropriate, within Member States in a borderless lifelong learning area, and will also improve the mobility and portability of qualifications at national level between various sectors of the economy and within the labour market; furthermore, it will contribute to the development and expansion of European cooperation in education and training.

ECVET is applicable for all learning outcomes which should in principle be achievable through a variety of education and learning paths at all levels of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (?EQF?), and then be transferred and recognised. This Recommendation therefore contributes to the wider objectives of promoting lifelong learning and increasing the employability, openness to mobility and social inclusion of workers and learners. It particularly facilitates the development of flexible and individualised pathways and also the recognition of those learning outcomes which are acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

It should also be noted that this Recommendation should facilitate the involvement of competent local and regional authorities in the exercise of linking national or other qualifications frameworks and systems to ECVET, where appropriate.

Based on the compromise reached between the European Parliament and the Council, the Council hereby recommends that Member States:

- Recommendation 1: promote the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training as set out in Annexes I and II at all levels of the [European Qualification Framework \(EQF\)](#) with reference to VET qualifications, in order to facilitate trans-national mobility and the recognition of learning outcomes in VET and borderless lifelong learning;
- Recommendation 2: create the necessary conditions and adopt measures, as appropriate, so that as from 2012 ? in accordance with national legislation and practice, and on the basis of trials and testing ? it is possible for ECVET to be gradually applied to VET qualifications at all levels of the EQF, and used for the purpose of the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes achieved in formal and, where appropriate, non-formal and informal contexts;
- Recommendation 3: support the development of national and European partnerships and networks involving institutions and authorities responsible for qualifications and diplomas, VET providers, social partners and other relevant stakeholders dedicated to trialling, implementing and promoting ECVET;
- Recommendation 4: ensure that stakeholders and individuals in the area of VET have access to information and guidance for using ECVET, whilst facilitating the exchange of information between the Member States. Furthermore, ensure that the application of ECVET to qualifications is properly publicised by the competent authorities and that associated ?Europass? documents issued by the competent authorities contain explicit relevant information;
- Recommendation 5: apply, in accordance with national legislation and practice, the common principles for quality assurance in VET set out in the Council conclusions of 28 May 2004 on Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training when using ECVET, particularly in relation to the assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes;
- Recommendation 6: ensure that there are functioning coordination and monitoring mechanisms at the appropriate levels, in accordance with the legislation, structures and requirements of each Member State, in order to guarantee the quality, transparency and consistency of the initiatives taken to implement ECVET.

They endorse the Commission's intention to:

- Intention 1: support Member States in carrying out the above-mentioned tasks and in using the principles and technical specifications of ECVET as set out in Annex II, in particular by facilitating testing, cooperation, mutual learning, promotion, and the launching of information and consultation exercises, whilst ensuring access to the guidance material for all interested citizens;
- Intention 2: develop users' guides and tools, and adapt relevant Europass documents, in collaboration with Member States, national and European experts and users; develop expertise for enhancing the compatibility and complementarity of ECVET and ECTS used in the higher education sector, in collaboration with VET and higher education experts and users at European and national levels; and provide regular information on the developments of ECVET;
- Intention 3: promote, and participate together with the Member States in, a European ECVET network involving relevant VET stakeholders and national competent institutions for the purpose of disseminating and supporting ECVET within Member States and establishing a sustainable platform for the exchange of information and experience between Member States; establish, from within this network, an ECVET users' group in order to contribute to the updating of the users' guide and to the quality and overall coherence of the cooperation process for the implementation of ECVET;
- Intention 4: monitor and follow up the action taken, including the results of trials and testing, and, after the assessment and evaluation of this action carried out in cooperation with the Member States, report, by 18 June 2014, to the European Parliament and the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review
- and adaptation of this Recommendation, involving the updating of the Annexes and guidance material, in cooperation with the Member States.

Non-binding use: the introduction and implementation of ECVET shall be voluntary. The recommendation does not aim at or require either the

fragmentation or the harmonisation of qualifications systems. It should be noted that ECVET does not imply any new entitlement for citizens to obtain the automatic recognition of either learning outcomes or points.

This recommendation includes two annexes containing the definitions and the main principles and technical specifications of the ECVET.

Lastly, it should be noted that this Recommendation is closely linked to the proposal on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (please see [COD/2008/0069](#)).