



**Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación**

European Region – Pan-European Structure

Vocational Education and Training Round Table

Background Package

**Budapest, 21-22 October 2009
Novotel, Budapest Centrum**

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Foreword

This background package for the European Roundtable on Vocational Education and Training (VET) reflects the fact that VET is starting to feature more prominently on EI's agenda. Although it is a complicated sector, which overlaps with many others, we would like to give it a place of its own amongst our priorities. This follows the desires of our member organisations, which were expressed at different events, such as the World Congress in Berlin in 2007 and at the different Round-Tables for Central and Eastern Europe.

In Europe in particular, the sector is undergoing major reforms. The European Commission, through the Copenhagen Process, has launched several new initiatives in recent years to create a European area for VET. Measures such as the European Qualifications Framework, the European Credit System for VET (ECVET) and European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) for VET are changing the organisation and provision of VET in many ways. The OECD has also focused its eyes on the sector, launching the 'Learning for Jobs' programme, which reviews VET policy in many European countries. We have to be wary that the current threat of commercialisation and privatisation does not accelerate due to these changes.

Unforeseen developments in our economies also force us to evaluate what is going on in VET. In times of an economic crisis, millions of people who now find themselves without a job will try to get access to new skills. Moreover, many sociologists and economists predict that young people, who will not be able to find low-skilled jobs, are expected to stay longer in education. This will lead to increasing demands, which pose both a challenge and an opportunity - a challenge, as there is wide disparity in the size and organisation of VET around Europe; and an opportunity at the same time, as the crisis creates an opportunity for trade unions to discuss these problems and define common strategies.

This round table has been designed to discuss the role of teachers for quality VET in the context of a knowledge-based society. Discussions will focus on recent developments in the work of international institutions, the role of the private sector, commercialisation and privatisation. A crucial topic is our own unionisation and representation, as we hope to come up with ways to enable unions to be a stronger voice for teachers in VET.



Vocational Education and Training Round Table
21-22 October 2009
Novotel Centrum, Budapest

Teachers for Quality VET - The Changing Role of VET in a Knowledge-Based Society
AGENDA

Simultaneous Translation Provided: English/French/Hungarian/Russian

Day 1: Wednesday 21 October

- 08.30-09.00 **Registration**

Chair: Paul Bennett, Vice-President, EIE/ETUCE
- 09.00-09.15 **Welcoming Remarks**
Paul Bennett, Vice-President, EIE/ETUCE
Piroska Galló, President, SEH (PSZ), Hungary, on behalf of Hungarian organisations
- 09.15-10.30 **Keynote Address: General Trends in VET in Europe over the Past Decades**
Dr. Hubert Ertl, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK
- Respondents**
Gerrit Stemerding, AoB, Netherlands
Laszlo Varga, President, Hungarian Public Confederation (SZEF)
Békési Tamás, SEH, Hungary and EU Advisory Committee for VET

Discussion
- 10.30-11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.00-12.15 **Global Trends in VET**
Presentation of Findings of VET Literature Review
Koen Geven, Education and Employment Unit, EI
OECD Policies and Programmes on VET
Bernard Hugonnier, Deputy Director, Education Directorate, OECD
ILO Policies and Programmes on VET and its Teachers and Trainers
William Ratteree, Education Sector Specialist, ILO

Discussion
- 12.15-12.45 **European Union Policies and Programmes on VET**
David Poissonneau, Policy Coordinator, ETUCE

Questions
- 12.45-14.15 Lunch
- 14.15-15.00 **Outcomes of the EI International Task Force on VET, an EI Draft Policy Package**
Monique Fouilhoux, Deputy General Secretary, EI
David Robinson, Canadian Association of University Teachers

Discussion

15.00-16.15	<p>Parallel Working Groups: VET in a Lifelong Learning Context</p> <p>Working Group 1: Linking VET to the Labour Market and Developments in the Privatisation of VET</p> <p>Chair: <i>Monique Fouilhoux</i>, Deputy General Secretary, EI</p> <p>Co-Moderators: <i>Christine Savantre</i>, UNSA-Education, France <i>Pat Forward</i>, Australian Education Union</p> <p>Rapporteur: <i>Dr. Stephanie Odenwald</i>, GEW, Germany</p> <p>Working Group 2: An EU framework for VET</p> <p>Co-Moderators: <i>Anders F. Johansson</i>, Lärarförbundet, Sweden <i>David Poissonneau</i>, Policy Coordinator, ETUCE</p> <p>Rapporteur: <i>Helmut Skala</i>, GOD-LEHRER, Austria</p> <p>Working Group 3: Unionisation of, and Qualifications for, VET Teachers</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Dan Taubman</i>, UCU, UK</p> <p>Rapporteur: <i>Koen Geven</i>, Education and Employment Unit, EI</p>
16.15-16.45	Coffee Break
16.45-17.45	Parallel Working Groups: Continuation
19.00	Reception

Day 2: Thursday 22 October

Chair: Paul Bennett, Vice-President, EIE/ETUCE

09.00-09.45	<p>Reports from the Working groups</p> <p><i>Working Group Rapporteurs</i></p> <p>Discussion</p>
09.45-10.45	<p>Trends in VET in Canada, Australia and Israel</p> <p><i>Luc Allaire</i>, Centrale des Syndicats du Québec <i>Pat Forward</i>, Australian Education Union Panelist from the Israel Teachers' Union</p> <p>Discussion</p>
10.45-11.15	Coffee Break
11.15-12.15	<p>Discussion on the Draft EI VET Policy Package</p> <p><i>Monique Fouilhoux</i>, Deputy General Secretary, EI <i>David Robinson</i>, Canadian Association of University Teachers</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Chair: Ronnie Smith, President, EIE/ETUCE</p>
12.15-13.00	<p>Closing Session</p> <p>Critical Reflections on the VET Round Table</p> <p><i>Dr. Hubert Ertl</i>, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK</p> <p>Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations</p> <p><i>Angele Attard</i>, Coordinator, Education and Employment Unit, EI</p> <p>Closing Remarks</p> <p><i>Ronnie Smith</i>, President, EIE/ETUCE</p>
13.00-14.30	Lunch
14.30	Opening Session of CEE Round Table



Table ronde sur l'enseignement et la formation professionnels
21-22 octobre 2009
Hôtel Novotel Centrum, Budapest

Enseignants pour un EFP de qualité –
L'évolution de l'EFP dans une économie fondée sur la connaissance
ORDRE DU JOUR

Traduction simultanée assurée en anglais/français/hongrois et russe

Jour 1: Mercredi, 21 octobre

- 08.30-09.00 **Inscriptions**
- Président : Paul Bennett, Vice-président de l'IEE/du CSEE*
- 09.00-09.15 **Mots de bienvenue**
Paul Bennett, Vice-président de l'IEE/du CSEE
Piroska Galló, Présidente, SEH (PSZ), Hongrie, au nom des organisations hongroises
- 09.15-10.30 **Discours d'ouverture : Tendances générales dans l'EFP en Europe durant les dernières décennies**
Dr. Hubert Ertl, Département Education, Université d'Oxford, Royaume-Uni
- Discussants**
Gerrit Stemerding, AoB, Pays-Bas
Laszlo Varga, Président, Confédération hongroise du Secteur Public (SZEF)
Békési Tamás, SEH, Membre du Conseil consultatif pour l'EFP dans l'UE (Hongrie)
- Discussion
- 10.30-11.00 *Pause*
- 11.00-12.15 **Tendances mondiales dans l'EFP**
- Présentation des constations de la littérature sur l'EFP**
Koen Geven, Unité Education et Emploi à l'IE
- Politiques et programmes de l'OCDE sur l'EFP**
Bernard Hugonnier, Directeur adjoint, Direction de l'Education, OCDE
- Politiques et programmes de l'OIT sur l'EFP, ses enseignants et formateurs**
William Ratteree, Spécialiste Secteur Education, OIT
- Discussion*
- 12.15-12.45 **Politiques et programmes de l'Union européenne sur l'EFP**
David Poissonneau, Coordinateur des Politiques, CSEE
- Questions
- 12.45-14.15 Déjeuner

- 14.15-15.00 **Résultats du groupe de travail international de l'IE sur l'EFP, projet d'un ensemble de politiques de l'IE**
Monique Fouilhoux, Secrétaire générale adjointe de l'IE
David Robinson, Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université
 Discussion
- 15.00-16.15 **Groupes de travail parallèles: l'EFP dans le contexte de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie**
- Groupe de travail 1: Le lien entre l'EFP et le marché de l'emploi et les développements de la privatisation dans l'EFP**
 Modératrice: *Monique Fouilhoux, Secrétaire générale adjointe*
 Intervenantes: *Pat Forward, Australian Education Union*
 Christine Savantre, UNSA-Education, France
 Rapporteur: *Dr. Stephanie Odenwald, GEW, Allemagne*
- Groupe de travail 2: Une structure UE pour l'EFP**
 Co-modérateurs: *Anders F. Johansson, Lärarförbundet, Suède*
 David Poissonneau, Coordinateur Politiques, CSEE
 Rapporteur: *Helmut Skala, GOD-LEHRER, Autriche*
- Groupe de travail 3: Syndicalisation et qualifications des enseignants dans l'EFP**
 Modérateur: *Dan Taubman, UCU, Royaume-Uni*
 Rapporteur: *Koen Geven, Unité Education et Emploi de l'IE*
- 16.15-16.45 Pause
- 16:45-17:45 **Groupes de travail parallèles: continuation**
- 19.00 Réception

Jour 2: Jeudi, 22 octobre

Président : Paul Bennett, Vice-président de l'IEE/CSEE

- 09.00-09.45 **Résultats des groupes de travail**
Rapporteurs des groupes de travail
 Discussion
- 09.45-10.45 **Grandes tendances de l'EFP au Canada, en Australie, et en Israël**
Luc Allaire, Centrale des Syndicats du Québec
Pat Forward, Australian Education Union
Panelliste de "Israel Teachers' Union"
 Discussion
- 10.45-11.15 Pause
- 11.15-12.15 **Débat sur le projet de politiques de l'IE sur l'EFP**
Monique Fouilhoux, Secrétaire générale adjointe de l'IE
David Robinson, Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université
 Discussion

Président: Ronnie Smith, Président de l'IEE/CSEE

12.15-13.00

Session de clôture

Réflexions critiques sur la table ronde EFP

Dr. Hubert Ertl, Département Education, Université d'Oxford, Royaume-Uni

Compte-rendu, conclusions et recommandations

Angele Attard, Coordinatrice, Unité Education et Emploi de l'IE

Commentaires de clôture

Ronnie Smith, Président de l'IEE/du CSEE

13.00-14.30

Déjeuner

14.30

Séance d'ouverture de la Table ronde pour l'Europe centrale et orientale

Working Group Outlines

Working Group 1: Linking VET to the labour market and developments in the privatisation of VET

Chair: Monique Fouilhoux, Deputy General Secretary, EI
Co-Moderators: Christine Savantre, UNSA-Education, France
Pat Forward, Australian Education Union
Rapporteur: Stephanie Odenwald, GEW

The private sector and VET interact in various ways. First of all, the discourse of the private sector has started to apply to VET, leading to commercialisation and privatisation of its provision. Secondly, the private sector is seeking influence over institutions providing VET and the contents of the education. While this influence is partly necessary to make sure that VET leads to decent jobs, the extent and organisation of the cooperation between the private sector and VET can be debated. Hence, this workshop will consist of two parts.

Part 1: The Role of the Private Sector in the Provision of VET

Firstly, a discussion will be held on international commercial pressures on VET which impose all kinds of private-sector discourses on the sector. Increasingly, education is provided in an international template, without regard for local needs. Teachers are facing casualised forms of employment, while being put in a client-relation with their students. Governance of schools will likely become less collegial, with an increasing influence from the private sector. In 2007, EI adopted a set of 'Guidelines on the Cross-Border Provision of VET' to provide a tool against these pressures. The guidelines address a number of topics on which concerns have arisen: accreditation and quality assurance; locally relevant content; mobility of teachers, staff and students; cross-border investment; cross-border supply and employment rights of staff. They can be used by unions on the national level and are promoted by EI on the international level. However, as pressures still exist, new methods to combat commercialisation might be reflected upon. The financial and economic crises have moreover put these developments in a new perspective, as the demand for education has increased, while funds are drying up.

Part 2: The Link between VET and the labour market

Secondly, the effects of the commercialisation of VET-provision can be seen in discussions on the links between VET and the world of work. These two are intrinsically linked, as an experience in the former must lead to a decent place in the latter. Indeed, the OECD's 'Learning for Jobs' project calls for 'more responsiveness of the VET-system to labour market needs'. Part of this agenda is a question of more specialisation, supposedly leading to better performance on the job-market. In the same discourse, employers are to be given a stronger role in the governance of VET schools and institutions, while more and more teachers are drawn from the private sector. However, as people are increasingly required to switch jobs every few years, it can be questioned if specialised skills lead to decent work on the long term. Perhaps, it can be argued more convincingly that generic competences such as languages, researching or 'learning to learn' will need to feature more prominently in the VET-curricula. Short-term interest from employers will in most cases not be very good for a VET system that has aims for the longer term. Furthermore, the potential for quality education might be lost when too many teachers are drawn from the private sector, without having received proper training. Hence, the second part of this workshop will discuss the complications of organising the link between VET and the labour market, stating the tensions as well as overlaps between the two worlds.

Questions for discussion:

- How can EI's guidelines be employed to combat commercialisation of VET?
- What are the strategies that unions can employ to address commercialisation of VET?
- How have the financial and economic crises influenced commercialisation of VET?
- How does the labour market place its demand on the VET sector?
- How should unions respond to the call for a stronger relation between VET and the labour market?

Working Group 2: An EU framework for VET

Co- Moderators: Anders F. Johansson, Lärarförbundet, Sweden
David Poissonneau, ETUCE
Rapporteur: Helmut Skala, GOD-LEHRER, Austria

Since 2002, the European Union aims for the establishment of a 'European Vocational Education and Training Area' through the 'Copenhagen Process'. This area is based on a set of tools to make VET systems across Europe more comparable, in order to increase the attractiveness of studying and working in Europe. Many ideas in the process are inspired by the 'Bologna Process', which has had similar aims for the higher education sector since 1999. In 2008, during the French EU-Presidency, the Copenhagen Process adopted the so-called 'Bordeaux Communiqué' in which it laid out its future agenda. The communiqué conceives of the European agenda as 'an EU framework for VET'. A main feature is the restructuring of VET curricula on the basis of the 'ECVET' system which it adopted in 2006. ECVET aims at dividing all coursework into comparable modules, based on learning outcomes. Also, it pushes for the introduction and expansion of quality assurance of VET through the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF). The 'European Qualifications Framework' plays an important role in this regard as it provides an overarching approach to qualifications in the European Union. 'Skills forecasts' are an analytical tool used by governments to assess the needs of the future labour market. On the European level, they are now to be developed every year in order to match 'new skills' with 'new jobs'. As the Copenhagen Process is increasingly important for national strategies for VET, discussions on the topic are of direct political necessity in order to consistently provide input to policy development on national and European level. The ETUCE will provide input to this session on its work, based on its statements and actions, as it represents the voice of teachers towards the process.

Questions for discussion:

- How are unions involved in discussions on these issues on the national level?
- What are the main problems in the implementation of the process?
- How can the ETUCE respond to these challenges?

Working Group 3: Unionisation of and Qualifications for VET Teachers

Moderator: Dan Taubman, UCU, UK
Rapporteur: Koen Geven, Education and Employment Unit, EI

In most countries in the world, it is not easy to identify the potential membership of unions working on VET. A first problem is identifying at which level staff and teachers are working, as VET can be provided at both secondary and higher education. Secondly, teachers often have different statuses, as they can be employed by a school, by a private company or both. Often, this difference in status will imply a different perspective on union membership. Thirdly, teachers will often have different types of qualifications, leading different perspectives on education and training. At the same time, international commercial pressures and international policy developments are forcing the sector to undergo profound changes. This marks the need for proper unionisation and representation of teachers in the field. This workshops will discuss how teachers can best be unionised and how EI can contribute to that process.

Questions for discussion:

- Are there common features of VET staff in Europe?
- What type of qualifications do VET teachers around Europe have?
- What are effective strategies to unionise teachers and staff in VET?

2009 EI EUROPE/ETUCE Report – Extract on VET

Introduction

In recent years, European cooperation in VET became more intense, particularly in the European Union. Many activities are undertaken in the 'Copenhagen process', which aims towards establishing a European VET area. Many new initiatives were launched by the European Commission, following the adoption of a new ministerial communiqué in 2008. Much of the ETUCE's work has therefore focused on representing teachers towards this process, by writing position papers and hosting internal discussions. In a conference for Central and Eastern European members in Riga, it was also recognised that VET is becoming more important for the wider European area. Therefore, a literature review and a survey to EI members were undertaken to better understand the issues in VET. Finally, in 2009, a pan-European conference is organised in Budapest, Hungary, to present this work and to host a meeting of the global EI taskforce on VET.

The Copenhagen Process – a New communiqué

Since 2002, cooperation on Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the EU takes place in the framework of the Copenhagen Process. In this process, the Commission consults representatives from Member States and national and European social partners on a biannual basis. This cooperation takes place in the so-called Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, where the ETUC is represented. The ETUCE therefore closely cooperates with the ETUC on matters related to VET.

In November 2008, Ministers of Education in the Member States, the European Social Partners and the Commission adopted a Communiqué setting out the priorities for the Copenhagen Process 2008-2010. The Bordeaux Communiqué addresses the implementation of tools and schemes for European cooperation in VET, particularly the establishment of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). It also speaks about the need to increase quality, excellence and attractiveness of VET, while improving the links between VET and the labour market. Another important issue is the need to strengthen cooperation between education sectors.

The ETUCE informed its member organisations of the new communiqué in a newsletter published in April 2008. The Bordeaux Communiqué was welcomed, in the hope that it will be followed by concrete action in EU Member States. Although a European space for VET is emerging and a close alignment of national priorities and the European agenda were observed, the implementation of common European tools and mechanisms is still to be made a reality. A European wide Conference planned under the banner of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union is planned for November 2009 and will focus on the role of VET in meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow. The ETUCE and EI's Pan-European Structure will be represented in this Conference.

Quality Assurance in VET (EQARF)

In April 2008, the European Commission issued a Proposal for a Council and Parliament Recommendation on Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training. The Commission expects the Parliament and the Council to adopt the proposal by March 2010. The ETUCE closely monitored the developments regarding the proposed Quality Assurance Reference Framework and informed member organisations about it in the June 2008 Newsletter.

The proposed European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQARF) consists of a range of quality criteria and quality indicators. By taking a cycle approach to the process of assuring and improving the quality of vocational education and training in Europe, the main function of the Framework should be to provide agreed cross-country references that can help Member States and stakeholders to document, develop, monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their VET provision. EQARF is a voluntary system to be used by public authorities and bodies charged with quality assurance and improvement in VET. The ETUCE contributed to the elaboration of the proposal by participating in two working group meetings on Quality Assurance in VET organised by the European Commission in March 2007.

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

In November 2006, the European Commission had launched a round of consultations on the idea of a new tool to strengthen the portability of VET certification, the European Credit System for VET (ECVET). With this system, the Commission wishes to foster mobility between different learning contexts and to promote lifelong learning. It is therefore proposed to establish a common framework that can be used to describe qualifications in terms of units with associated credit points.

The ETUCE was informed about ECVET in a Social Partners' conference organised by CEDEFOP on this issue in early 2007. Further to an internal consultation of its member organisations on this topic, the ETUCE issued a position paper in response to the consultation, which was adopted by the Executive Board in April 2007. The ETUCE expressed overall support of the idea and purpose of ECVET, but also concern that the ECVET would give rise to unnecessary bureaucracy or administrative burdens which are not proportionate to the goals it fulfils. Discussions on ECVET also surfaced in the Bologna Process, as the proposal mirrors some principles of the ECTS system that is in place in higher education. Following this discussion, EI placed an article about the subject on its web-page.

The European Commission issued its first proposal for an ECVET in April 2008. The recommendation was the result of the work of a technical working group established by the Commission which consisted of experts from participating countries in Education and Training 2010, the European Social Partner and other education stakeholders. After the publication of the recommendation, a second round of consultation was launched. The ETUCE reiterated its position in a Statement adopted by the Executive Board in November 2008, supporting the principle of ECVET but warning against administrative burdens and the potential confusion with other existing tools such as the European Qualification Framework and the Europass. The ETUCE secretariat has further presented this position in a CEDEFOP conference on VET tools which took place in Thessaloniki in February 2009. The European Parliament adopted the Recommendation on ECVET in December 2008, while the Council did so in May 2009.

New Skills for New Jobs

In November 2007, the EU Education Council underlined the need to prepare people for new jobs within the knowledge society through the raising of overall skills levels, giving priority to those with low skills or/and at risk of economic and social exclusion. In these conclusions, the Council invites the Commission to analyse the need for advisory mechanisms to strengthen the identification of new types of jobs and skill needs at the European level such as skills forecasts and a European network on skills. In response, the Commission issued a Communication in December 2008 on New Skills for New Jobs: Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs. In a statement adopted by the ETUCE Bureau at its meeting on 24-25 February 2009, the ETUCE supports the Commission's aim of creating more knowledge about future developments in the European labour market. Nevertheless, first underlining that education and training serve a broader purpose than answering specific labour market demands, the ETUCE also emphasizes that while forecasting can serve as a source of information for stakeholders in education and employment, it cannot be seen as the primary basis for sustainable political decisions. As presented in the Commission staff working document accompanying the official communication, forecasts cannot be seen as precise information source for policy making, but are solely one source of information among other.

As in previous years, the ETUCE additionally warned the relevant EU institutions and Member States about the risk of a severe shortage of qualified teachers in Europe in the years to come. It was stressed that Member States must increase their efforts to raise the attractiveness and status of the teaching profession, as well as the quality of teacher education to meet skills demands.

Matching Skills Supply and Labour Market Needs

Since 2007, Cedefop has worked closely with the Commission and Skillsnet – Cedefop’s international network on early identification of skill needs- on the establishment of reliable forecasting mechanisms in Europe. In 2008, Cedefop issued its first Medium-term forecast up to 2020 for EU-25 countries on the future skill needs in Europe. The continuing shift away from , agriculture and traditional manufacturing towards services and knowledge-intensive jobs was confirmed. A growing demand for the highly and medium skilled is foreseen, as well as a change in the nature of all jobs and skills requirements. In 2009, Cedefop published a study, focusing this time on the future skill supply in Europe up to 2020. The findings of this forecasting exercise show that an increased requirement of 20 million is expected for people with high level qualifications and of 5 million for those with medium level qualifications. A decrease of 17 million is expected in those qualifying at the lowest level. Another expected general trend is an increase in the participation of women in the labour market. ETUCE has informed its member organisations on these developments by the Cedefop by the publication of an article on its forecasting exercises in the June 2009 edition of its Newsletter.

In order to present the results of its forecasting, Cedefop organised a Conference in Thessaloniki in June 2009. The ETUCE attended the Conference and learned more about the methodology behind the analysis of future skill needs in Europe. Indeed, the ‘New skills for new jobs’ initiative underlined the need for better information on the skills needs by the labour market if we are to prevent mismatches between the supply and the demand of labour force skills. It was agreed by all participants at the Conference that there is a need for skills upgrading in Europe, particularly in times of crisis which give a sense of urgency to action. Furthermore, a more precise and refined forecasting in terms of jobs and sectors is necessary. Increasing investment in education and training was also discussed. However, the discussion opened the question of private financing of education. The ETUCE is concerned that if the current economic crisis continues, it could lead to more privatisation in education. ETUCE continues to follow up any new initiatives by Cedefop aimed at early identification and anticipation of skill development. Cedefop is charged with the task of developing a European Skills forecasting system and plans to publish, as from 2010, regular updates on skills supply and demand in Europe.

Cluster on VET Teachers

Since the initiation of the Copenhagen Process, teachers and trainers in VET had been identified as a key priority. All subsequent Communiqués have confirmed this priority, stating that VET educators are important actors in promoting the attractiveness of VET education. In 2006, a sub-group on VET teachers and trainers was established in order to address the specific issues concerning practitioners and to boost cooperation and mutual exchange of good practices by Member states.

The Cluster organised four Peer Learning Activities (PLAs): in 2007 in Austria on VET partnership between schools and companies and the role of teachers and trainers; in 2008 in Portugal on the validation of non-formal and informal learning for VET teachers and trainers; in 2008 in Slovenia on VET teachers as agents of change towards the autonomy of VET schools and the last one in May 2009 in Germany on the professionalism of teachers and in-company trainers in VET. Each PLA came up with a set of recommendations and a report on the activity. ETUCE informed its member organisations about the organisation of PLA activities via its Circular on Education and Training 2010.

European Commission Studies on VET Teachers and trainers

At the time of writing this report, the European Commission is conducting two studies in order to analyse the very diverse situation of VET teachers and trainers across Europe. The two reports are expected in the autumn of 2009 and will present possible actions and measures on the qualification and recruitment of trainers, their work and environment and possible professional

development. ETUCE will inform its member organisation on the results of these studies as soon as they are available.

In February 2008, ETUCE developed a project proposal to the European Commission on VET teachers and trainers, aimed at strengthening the role of teachers' trade unions in promoting and ensuring their continuous professional development in initial VET. The project proposal was rejected by the European Commission in the fall 2008. The ETUCE submitted an improved proposal to the Commission, following the recommendations of the external evaluators in charge of assessing the proposals. The project was rejected in the autumn 2009. The main reasons mentioned for these rejections were the lack of external evaluation of the project planned as well as the too narrow target group of the project – the 110 ETUCE member organisations in EU/EFTA. The second ETUCE proposal was evaluated as too ambitious, mixing many operational objectives which could be difficult to achieve.

Riga Conference for EI's Central and Eastern European members

Every year, EI hosts a meeting for members in Central and Eastern European members, in order to gather members and discuss developments in this area. The 2007 conference was dedicated to the issue of Vocational Education and Training, which became increasingly important for the educational and economic development strategies in these countries. The conference invited EI's Pan-European structure to increase its work on VET, particularly on funding aspects, quality assurance mechanisms, recognition of qualifications and diplomas, through networking and organisation of seminars. Hence, a section on EI's website about VET was created, informing members of recent developments in VET policy. Further work however required more analysis (see next point).

Literature Review, Survey and Pan-European conference

In order to increase its work on VET, knowledge about the topic had to be increased. VET is a complex sector, which varies widely over different countries and is mostly provided at the levels of secondary and higher education. Therefore a literature study was undertaken to analyse the main academic debates on the topic. An analysis was made on four topics, comprising the definition of VET, the link between VET and economic development, the link between VET and the labour market and the place of teachers in VET. The study confirmed EI's concern that the VET sector is particularly vulnerable to commercialisation and suggested that work to defend the sector should be increased. Also, the place of teaching personnel must be made clearer, as there seems to be a wide disparity in the professional status. Next to the review, a survey of EI's members was carried out to create more overview over members' activities. Both the literature review and the survey will be presented at the Pan-European conference in Budapest, in October 2009, which is dedicated to VET. Following the report of the VET taskforce at EI's World Congress in Berlin, a meeting of the new taskforce will be organised in parallel to the conference, which will discuss a comprehensive policy package on VET.

Conclusion and Future

Vocational Education and Training is becoming an increasingly important topic in Europe. As the Copenhagen Process is approaching its first deadlines in 2010, it will require close monitoring from teacher unions in order to fend off a too narrow economic discourse. On the wider European level, it will be a challenge to engage more members in the discussions on VET. In the light of the financial crisis however, a strong focus on VET is emerging. Hopefully the upcoming seminars will contribute to this focus.



Literature Review

Vocational Education and Training

12 October 2009

The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophies. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water. (John Gardner).

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Introduction

Investing in a strong, public VET-sector must be crucial in knowledge-based societies as well as in developing countries. As the UNESCO Revised Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training notes: *'Given the immense scientific, technological and socio-economic development, either in progress or envisaged, which characterizes the present era, particularly globalization and the revolution in information and communication technology, technical and vocational education should be a vital aspect of the educational process in all countries'* (UNESCO, 2001). VET is important as it enriches a person for life and it provides competences needed in a democratic society. Societal and economic development depends on the strength of VET as it provides access to skills and entry routes into the labour market. In particular for under-privileged and marginalised groups, it can be an important entry route into a better life.

The sheer size of the sector in some parts of the world should confirm the importance of VET. Even though there are huge problems in data-collection, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) has found that in both Europe and Oceania, more than sixty percent of pupils in upper secondary education, weighted by school-age population, are enrolled in VET programmes, with the rest of the world hovering around ten percent (UIS, 2006, p. 46)¹. As VET is provided at almost all levels of education, the real numbers of students in the sector will probably be much higher.

In 2007, Education International's Executive Board adopted a set of Guidelines for Cross-Border Provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET). The Guidelines were *'intended to address and counterbalance the threats posed by trade and investment agreements, not only to staff jobs and living standards, but to the quality of education and training students receive'* (Education International, 2007a). Clearly, as in other sectors of education, a neo-liberal approach to governance and regulation dominates some international circles of policy-makers. However, as VET is by definition positioned close to the market, acting as a hub between general education and the labour market, it is not hard to imagine EI's concern that VET *'is particularly vulnerable to these pressures'* (EI, 2007). It will become clear from this literature review that governments use many excuses for not taking responsibility for public VET-systems, because it is a complex sector, because international agencies are telling them not to, because of a misunderstanding of the labour market, or because it is simply considered to be too expensive to make the needed changes.

This literature review has been carried out to address threats to VET from an academic point of view. It is meant to complement a survey to EI-member organisations that was sent out in early April 2009 by providing an analytical framework for any conclusion that will be drawn. Several volumes of the Journal for Vocational Education and Training and the International Journal on Education Development - spanning from the mid-nineties to today - have been consulted, in order to select articles relevant for teachers unions. Furthermore, a set of books was selected to complement and frame the debates in the journals. Interestingly, the inclusion of GATS played only a very minor role in academic literature (only one article could be identified), maybe stemming from the fact that it takes long for the academic world to catch up with EI's concerns.

From an academic perspective, several problems however did surface quite immediately. The most existential one is a problem of definition. As VET is provided from ISCED levels 2 to 5, it is hard to clearly delineate it from other sectors. Secondly, the literature is not clear about the role of VET in social and economic development. There is much controversy surrounding the policies of the World Bank, which has put VET quite strongly in contrast with general education, promoting an

¹ North America is an exception with only 4% of pupils studying in these type of programmes. The report notes that this is partly a consequence of the Mexican system, that has a low gross enrolment rate in upper secondary education in general (UNESCO UIS 2006, p. 46).

agenda of privatisation while reducing the availability of loans for the sector. On the other hand, VET is strongly associated with high growth rates in economies in South-East Asia as well as the industrialised world.

Thirdly, a debate exists on the link between VET and the labour market. While this link is generally seen as important, the way of organising and planning it requires further clarification. Also, it is important not to conceptualise VET as purely a tool for the labour market, but as an important public good in its own right. Finally, as EI is a representative organisation of employees in the education sector, there is the obvious question of the place and status of teaching personnel, which will be addressed even though little comparative research has been done on this topic. The review therefore addresses these four dimensions, while trying to keep the overall perspective and concerns on a strong, public VET-system in mind.

To begin with, it is necessary to assess the political arena in which VET is embedded. For most international organisations, including EI, VET has not always received the highest priority. In the context of the growing importance accorded to lifelong learning and the current global financial and economic crisis, policy makers are focusing increasingly on the importance of VET. Indeed, UNESCO-UNEVOC (the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training) has recently received a new mandate to develop new areas of expertise; the ILO has given VET an important position in its Decent Work Agenda; and the OECD has started an extensive review of VET policies in member states. Finally, there is the omnipresent threat posed by the GATS negotiations, which were a major point of concern for the taskforce. Thus, while this literature review is meant to shed some light on academic debates, the international political reality also requires policy and actions. Therefore, for each section, some implications for EI are discussed as well. An important job lies ahead for the EI taskforce in identifying major concerns, based on sound analysis.

Finally, it might be important to note that there are many issues that this review does *not* address. For example, the place of students and trainees in the system is one that is constantly changing, especially in more commodified education systems. Also, many interesting debates exist on the quality of the education students receive, pointing to quality assurance and accreditation models that aim at enhancing quality. These important issues are to be addressed in future work, although they have already been kept in mind while presenting the current analysis.

1. What is Vocational Education and Training?

Defining VET as a sector within the education system poses a number of difficulties. For the most part, general and academic education is seen as that which builds analytical skills, knowledge and an attitude of critical thinking, while vocational education and training stimulates craftsmanship, practical experience and an attitude of practical problem-solving. However, this simple distinction does not hold up to scrutiny. Critical thinking and analytical skills are needed by a good plumber or electrician who must routinely make judgements to solve problems. Equally, a good surgeon needs a large set of practical skills to masterfully operate a patient. These simple distinctions can also lead to confusion and academic drift of vocational institutions or a vocationalisation of higher education (for the former, cf. Neave, 1978; for the latter cf. Williams, 1985). In this section, different approaches to defining VET are discussed and suggestions are made on how EI can take the question of definition forward.

A Practical Problem

Although sounding abstract, the discussion on what VET constitutes is first of all a practical discussion. A question of definition leads to further questions of where VET is offered, who studies it and under which conditions and, crucially for EI, who works in these institutions under which types of conditions.

VET is offered at different levels of education systems and in a variety of institutions. Clive Chappel (2003, p. 26) makes this very clear, noting that in Australia VET is provided by:

- educational institutions including schools, TAFE (Technical and Further Education) colleges, Adult and Community Education (ACE) and universities;
- public, private and non-government providers of education and training;
- industry, in-house and organisation-specific training; and
- small business and private training consultants.

In the UIS study mentioned above, the assumption is made that VET students can be identified as early as at ISCED level 2, usually designated as lower secondary education, up to ISCED level 5, usually the first cycle of higher education (UIS, 2006, p 10). Moreover, VET can sometimes be identified in aspects of general education or even outside the general education system, in various kinds of informal learning.

Hence, it is nearly impossible for anyone to give good estimates of how many students are studying in the sector. A related problem exists for teachers' unions, as it is hard to identify who works inside these institutions and with what type of contract. As will be made clear in section four of this review, some authors identify up to twenty-four different teaching profiles in VET institutions (cf. Grollmann and Rauner, 2007).

An Analytical Problem

In a study analysing the emergence of vocational education and training in the United States, Grant Venn (1964) explains the etymology of the term 'vocational' as a sort of 'calling'. It was education that aimed at a stable job and a stable career in a recognised profession, thus pinpointing its emergence somewhere in the 19th century industrial revolution. However, in more recent times, this cannot be said to apply. Societal institutions – religious, political cultural, economic and social – which were once based on permanency were subsequently caught up in the twentieth century trend of 'change' (ibid, pp.38-39). However, as the reasons for VET did not remain obvious, its status started to be put in question. Indeed, much of the literature on VET focuses on the lack of a clear and respectful definition of the term 'vocational'.

John Stevenson (2005), researching on VET in Australia remarks that *'wherever one looks, the place for the vocational appears to be similar – the vocational is at the bottom of a hierarchy of knowledge and value, it is a stream of learning available to the "lower achiever", it is governed in a paternalistic way with highly circumscribed degrees of freedom over content and process, it is legitimated solely in industrial and other utilitarian terms, rather than in the connections among different kinds of meaning-making, and it is preserved for occupations of lower status'* (ibid, pp.335-336). Instead, Stevenson adopts a view from John Dewey in that a *'vocation means nothing but such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person, because of the consequences they accomplish, and also useful to his associates'* (ibid, p.348). However, while such a definition raises the status of the 'vocational' it doesn't solve the practical problem of pinpointing it in certain institutions. In such an approach, vocationalism is important for all types of studies, as even for academics, its meaning will often arise in application.

Gavin Moodie (2002) analyses existing definitions in four dimensions - epistemological, teleological, hierarchical and pragmatic. He argues that a definition is needed on all four levels, stating that *'one may consider vocational education and training to be the development and application of knowledge and skills for middle-level occupations needed by society from time to time'* (ibid, p.260). Such a pragmatic definition seems to match the approach of UNESCO in its Revised Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), with UNESCO giving preference to the term 'technical and vocational education and training' over the term 'vocational education and training'. The Revised Recommendation on TVET states that 'technical and vocational education' is *'used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life'* (UNESCO, 2001, 2).

A Political Problem

If one or the other definition of VET is given importance, this might mean that some forms of provision will be left out or given more importance than others. Therefore, the position that VET is given in relation to the rest of the education system matters politically. For instance, consider the debate on the relation between gender inequalities and VET. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics concludes that it is hard to make any conclusions on whether VET contributes to gender inequalities. It notes that the issue is complex and likely to vary greatly across regions and countries. It is further made clear that there is both over-representation and under-representation of girls in different countries (UIS 2006, p. 63). However, Moses Oketch, who writes about the question of vocationalisation in Africa, is more critical, stating "that the gender inequalities that have persisted in the general programmes are also prevalent in the TVET programmes. But where the picture seems improved in terms of female participation, TVET is relegated to a less prestigious strand of education. It is really a double loss for girls in such cases," (Oketch 2007, p 229). In Africa, the VET sector is often small and offered at lower levels, making the conclusions by Oketch understandable.

Another approach to this political problem comes directly from the role of the state, which is related to how the labour market should be organised. As VET is an intended bridge from the education system to the labour market, such broader visions are important for the design of the system. Linda Clarke and Christopher Winch trace different definitions of VET to the historical context of the nation-state. They contrast the German and French systems on the one hand with the British system on the other. In the former, the state is instrumental in setting a politically defined programme of VET, in the structuring of the labour market and in determining relations between capital and labour. In contrast, in Britain, the state's role is one of governance or supervision, introducing new sets of rules or laws, rather than in intervening in relations between capital and labour. As a result, the labour market and relations between labour and capital become or appear fragmented, often arbitrarily linked to state institutions and thus unresponsive or

unpredictably responding to local or state policies. Consequently, for the authors the British VET model is one of less state intervention, and of more social injustice (Clarke and Winch 2007, p 14). It is not hard to imagine that the vision of the state towards the labour market then to a large part defines how VET is organised, who pays, where it is provided and who enjoys its opportunities. Thus, it must be clear by now that a definition of VET is ultimately political, as it involves the central questions of who gets what, when and how (Lasswell 1936).

Implications for EI

For EI, the question of definition has a number of practical implications. First of all, it must be realised that any choice of definition will entail a gross simplification of reality. Not all VET systems around the world, or even in one country, can be described in a few lines, as the very many nuances will necessarily be omitted. Therefore, some member organisations will not identify with the definition and some of their problems might be ignored. Indeed, such a problem might apply if a definition is chosen that is built too much on the continental European model. Secondly, if a too general definition is chosen, it risks being a tautology such as 'education that prepares for the labour market' (as all types of education do). Therefore, it might be a fruitful strategy to separate the process of developing a definition of what VET is in the 'real world', as well as adopting a vision of what VET in the eyes of EI should be, taking into account the problems mentioned above.

2. VET and Development

The industrialised world invests more in vocational schooling than the developing world. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics finds a simple correlation between the two, as “the greater a country’s Gross Domestic Product per capita, the greater its secondary Percentage of Technical/Vocational Enrolment,”(UIS 2006, p. 54). However, surprisingly, there is little in the literature to support the link between VET and development. With few exceptions, the standard conclusion is that it is wiser for governments to invest in general education than in vocational education and training. This line of reasoning has been set by the term ‘the vocational school fallacy’ that was coined by Philip Foster, researching the externalities of Western education reform in Ghana in 1965. A second influential strand of work originates from authors linked to the World Bank, who argue that while VET can be important for growing economies, the organisation of VET should be minimal, with strong private sector involvement both in terms of organising supply and creating demand. A third factor is the EFA agenda, which according to some made ‘VET fall from grace’ (McGrath 2002). As targets have been set for many education sectors, but not for VET, concerns over this sector, have nearly disappeared from the international development agenda. These three approaches to VET are critically examined below, and some implications for EI are suggested.

The Vocational School ‘Fallacy’

Kenneth King and Chris Martin (2002) explain the VET ‘fallacy’ as a challenge between reality and planning. Foster’s main message was that youth in Africa had already quite rationally decided in the sixties – despite all types of attempts to change that attitude - that an academic education would be better for achieving their goals and improving their position than vocational schooling. Thus while policy can have many noble goals of improving the situation of socially and economically disadvantaged people, the actual attitudes and behaviour of young people did not match these goals. Foster’s conclusions were based on a study of perceptions of young Ghanaian males on their future prospects and education opportunities. Although several methodological points are made and the mitigating effects of schools on society are recognised, King and Martin’s survey still concludes that “Foster’s message today as in 1963 remains relevant for any attempts to use schools to deliver massive changes in attitude and aspiration in the absence of any parallel initiatives in the larger economic environment,”(King and Martin 2002, p 24). Oketch is more critical of the fallacy, claiming that it does not have to apply today, as vocational education is seen as training for future training; not as a way to facilitate job entry, but as a way to facilitate vocational-specific skills over a lifetime. He argues that VET in Africa needs to be reformed to train for what he calls “higher skills’, linking better with the informal sector,” (Oketch 2007). It is however clear that the ‘fallacy’ continues to influence policy-makers today, making them sceptical about the need for VET.

The World Bank and VET

An influential World Bank publication ‘Skills for Productivity’ from 1993 attempts to summarise the record of VET in economic development, develop options for public policies and suggest strategies for policy reform. The vocational school fallacy is taken as a point of departure, although significantly more research material is analysed. The position of the World Bank is interesting, as it has funded many projects in VET in the past. “From 1963 – 1976, more than half of World Bank-assisted investments in the educational systems of developing countries supported vocational education or training. Two-thirds of this investment was made in middle-income countries. Similar patterns persisted well into the 1980s, not only for the World Bank, but also for the investment programs of the Asian, African, and Inter-American Development Banks,” (Middleton et al, p 4). The dilemma that gives rise to the study is that developing nations are faced with a dual problem while developing strategies for increasing the access to ‘middle-level skills’: improving productivity under severe resource constraints and responding to competing demands for public education and

training resources, not the least of which is improving access to, and quality of, basic education (Middleton et al, p 3). Therefore, the results of VET should be seen in the context of other investments as well. The authors take note of the above mentioned problems of definition, and combined with a lack of data conclude that because of such problems "it is not surprising that the attempts to examine VET's contribution to economic growth have been unsuccessful," (Middleton et al 1993, p. 46). However, this does not stop them from drawing far-reaching conclusions. Three critical dimensions are then defined which can make VET cost-effective as a strategy: "when it is focused on improving productivity, when jobs are available, and when it produces workers with needed skills of acceptable quality. Understanding the economic context in which training is delivered is therefore critical to the development of effective training policies and programs," (Middleton et al 1993, p. 70). Not surprisingly, these are also the points of departure of the World Bank policy paper on VET, which was written two years earlier by the same authors as the book.

The policy paper focuses on four main strategies to improve VET provision:

1. Strengthening Primary and Secondary Education;
2. Encouraging Private Sector Training;
3. Improving Effectiveness and Efficiency in Public Training;
4. Training and Equity Strategies (World Bank 1991).

It is hard to pinpoint one clear message from the policy paper, as some messages can be seen as in conflict with each other. On the one hand, the study is critical of the role of public providers, as there are problems of 'rigid planning and management', 'weak linkages to employers', 'inappropriate objectives' and 'inadequate financing' (World Bank 1991, p 26-29). On the other hand, there should be a role for the state, 'compensating for market distortions in wage policy', 'capturing external benefits', offsetting weak private training capacity' and 'improving equity' (World Bank 1991, p. 34-37). Perhaps then, the role of the state that is envisaged is the one of the British state as identified above, more a mediator than one that strongly regulates. However, it is this point that raises quite some controversy. As Paul Bennell, in a critical article on the Bank's involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa argues, "perhaps the most critical issue is the largely unresolvable tension that exists between the Bank's obvious desire to promote its demand-driven VET-reforms and the feasibility of actually implementing this agenda in developing countries and especially in SSA. (...) The continuation of such a dirigiste role for the state does not sit comfortably with its essentially voluntaristic and supportive role envisaged in the VETSPP [Policy Paper]. Not surprisingly, therefore, this dilemma is likely to seriously limit the Bank's own (operational) room for manoeuvre," (Bennell 1996, p. 485).

Several other authors, also linked to the World Bank, have published similar material. In these articles, the stand towards VET is slightly more positive, although the discourse remains the same. Psacharopoulos, writing about two decades of education policy in the World Bank, argues that the Bank is not against VET, but against VET provided in general schools. Instead, vocational schooling should take place in dedicated vocational schools (Psacharopoulos 2006, p 335). Tzannathos and Johnes, writing about training and skills development in East Asia, do attribute a part of the economic growth in the region to role of VET. The model that these countries have used is one largely built on the private sector. For example, in Singapore, training levies are paid through a 1% tax imposed on companies using as tax base the wages paid to low paid workers. They conclude that the "low social rates of return to vocational education and the high rates observed in the case of in-service training suggest that the fundamental question in skills development is not whether to vocationalise schools but at what stage in the education process," (Tzannatos and Johnes, 1997). Thus again, VET is not entirely abandoned, as long as it is organised in a discourse of privatisation and competition.

VET and Education for All

The policies described above do not sit very well with the general line of thinking adopted in the Education For All agenda. The Global Monitoring Report 2009 is quite hostile towards the agenda of 'choice, competition and voice', stating that competition and choice have the potential to reinforce inequality. Moreover, when Ministers met in Seoul in 1999 at the Second International Congress on TVE they adopted a goal of 'Technical and Vocational Education for All', stating that, "TVE is one of the most powerful instruments for enabling all members of the community to face new challenges and to find their roles as productive members of society. It is an effective tool for achieving social cohesion, integration and self esteem," (UNESCO, 1999).'

At the same time, however, it can be questioned how the EFA agenda, adopted in Dakar in 2000, *does* contribute to VET. Goal three – 'promote learning and skills for young people and adults' – is the only goal that addresses some aspects of VET. The goal is not very concrete (certainly not as strong as the Seoul conclusions) and is consequently interpreted in many different ways (UNESCO 2009, p. 91). Perhaps that is the reason why VET is not mentioned in the GMR. However, the focus on primary education in the EFA goals can also distract governments from developing proper strategies for VET. The dilemma, described already by the World Bank, is made quite visible in a study by the IIEP for the World Bank by David Atchoarena and André Marcel Delluc on VET in Sub-Saharan Africa. They explain that in Malawi, where 90% of the population dwelling is rural, the government has been preoccupied with meeting international goals of expanding basic education rather than developing a TVET system which matches the kind of rural life that a majority lead. Similar reason suffice in Algeria, Lesotho, Chad and Senegal where TVET figures are either less than 2% or are just slightly above it but not reaching 3% level (Atchoarena and Delluc 2001, p.37-38).' Simon McGrath, in an attempt to formulate a new skills agenda for development, goes a little further by saying that the absence of language of skills in the international targets increases the likelihood of reduced attention for VET. Moreover, the reduction in emphasis on skills development in cooperation activities is not consistent with OECD governments' own programmes and policies at home (McGrath 2002, p.426-427). Finally, Oketch is again most critical, stating that "nowhere is TVET mentioned and/or even when it is mentioned, it is not in the agenda of international community or the national governments to finance," (Oketch 2007, p.228).

Implications for EI

As EI advocates for a strong and public VET-system, it certainly cannot feel very comfortable with the bulk of literature stressing strong private involvement. However, there is quite some debate on the privatisation agenda, giving EI some room for involvement. Therefore, EI's policies should be seen as a strength rather than a weakness as its voice will be quite unique. At the same time, the problems defined above should be taken into account, as it will not be easy to convince policy-makers without addressing their concerns head-on. One of the first implications could therefore be to involve key people from developing countries (either representing teachers from the VET sector or the general education sector) to debate concerns. Secondly, it could be considered to involve some of the more critical researchers in developing an agenda for VET. Thirdly, EI should use its policies to engage in a dialogue with the international institutions. These organizations tend to react to criticism, in some cases quite strongly, which will be useful to raise attention to EI's positions. Fourthly, as the debate on the link between VET and Education for All is a complex one, further research and debate on this topic will be necessary to inform future involvement of EI in EFA, as this is the primary forum in which concerns over development are raised.

3. The Connection with the Labour Market

While several things have already been said about the connection between VET and the labour market, a better understanding of this relation is still necessary. For labour unions concerned with questions of decent work, this question should probably be central. While general vocational education is important, a system that is disconnected from the world of work leads to undervalued skills or worse, unemployment. The ILO recommendation concerning 'Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning' departs from this reasoning, stating that members should 'ensure that vocational education and training systems are developed and strengthened to provide appropriate opportunities for the development and certification of skills relevant to the labour market (ILO 2004, III.f)'. Firstly, the organisation of the link between VET and the labour market is important, in which apprenticeships play an important role. Secondly, the content of programmes is important, as it is a concern of some that employers are having too much influence. From an international perspective however, it is hard to generalise about something as local as curricula. Instead, some points are made on the methods of defining curricular content through so-called 'skills projections'.

Categorising the Link

In different countries, the transition from school to work is organised in different ways, related to different modes of production. Grollman and Rauner describe four models of organising the school to work transition, which is associated with different types of problems. The systems differ depending on the significance assigned to the occupation as the organising principle for labour markets, the company work organisation and vocational training. The first model, '*Direct Transition*' is based on the Japanese situation and does not contain an organised 'bridge' between school and employment. Rather, extra training is offered in independently chosen employment in large companies, which offer training for their employees. This type of training is described to be successful because of a high company loyalty and high work morale.

The second model, '*Hardly Regulated Transition*', is based upon the situation in the UK and to a lesser extent Italy and Spain. The model is characterised by a relatively long and little regulated transition phase with extensive search and orientation processes for youth. It comes along with a high rate of youth unemployment and other social risk situations. Participation in training programmes is closely linked to entry into the employment system and commencement of gainful employment can be a temporary solution during one's search for a job.

The third model, '*Regulated Overlapping Transition*', is based upon central European countries such as Austria, Switzerland and Germany as well as Denmark. The transition from school to work takes place via a regulated system of apprenticeship. The young person is a trainee, a student in a vocational school, and an employee in a company as an apprentice at the same time. Youth employment is low as vocational education acts as a bridge between the working world and the education system.

The fourth and final model, '*Shifted Transition*', is based upon countries with a well-developed, school-based state vocational training system. Completion of general education is followed by a vocationally related or vocationally oriented form of school. On completion of the vocational school, the students usually acquire a state certificate for special subjects or a school occupation attained. School and work thus remain institutionally separate (Grollmann and Rauner 2008, p 2-6).

Apprenticeships

The apprenticeship is a term from the middle ages that can mean very different things. For the World Bank for example, the 'traditional apprenticeship' is offered by a small business owner, which is willing, for a fee, to teach a skill or trade that is in demand. The training period varies in length, depending upon the technical difficulty of the trade and how quickly apprentices master the body of skills. Such apprenticeships are still found in North and West Africa and to a lesser extent in Latin America (Middleton et al 1993, p 174). Such an apprenticeship is quite the opposite of what is described above, especially in the more regulated transitions. In the latter situation, the apprenticeship is in the interest of the company, which employs and gives a (modest) salary to the apprentice. The word 'apprenticeship' is therefore quite ambiguous. Paul Ryan, in an attempt to calculate the economic merits of apprenticeship, explains that the category ranges from the informal, purely work-based, learning-by-doing which still predominates in developing countries to formal, structured programmes of general education and vocational preparation sponsored by large industrial firms in some advanced economies (Ryan 1998).

The OECD, perhaps for this reason, prefers the broader term 'workplace learning' to mean all these things. For the OECD, there are many advantages to apprenticeship for all involved - the individual, the company, the education system and the labour market more generally (OECD forthcoming). These seem to match the positive conclusions from Ryan, who states that apprenticeship is associated with moderate gains in subsequent employment for participants, particularly relative to job training and labour market programmes, but also relative to full time vocational education. However, gains are not equal for men and women, as men seem to benefit more (Ryan 1998). But the OECD sees even more constraints to the apprenticeship. First of all, apprenticeships might not always fulfil student needs. Secondly, there are also problems on the supply side as firms might be more interested in productivity gains than in providing a learning experience and might finally be focused too much on firm-specific skills (OECD forthcoming).

Key Skills and Competences for the Labour Market

In Europe, the design of curricula and the places available for studying are to some extent based upon large scale economic analyses of 'skills needs'. Such skills projects lead to large conclusions and reports, bearing ambitious titles such as 'Key Skills for the Knowledge Economy' or 'Les Métiers en 2015'. The European Centre for Vocational Education and Training, CEDEFOP argues this development is continuing as "recent economic developments, decreasing supply of skills due to demographic change and increasingly felt shortages of workforce in many Member States have become an important push factor in developing systems for early identification of skills," (CEDEFOP 2008, p 30). These skills projections are based on a multiplicity of methods, both quantitative and semi-quantitative, such as econometric forecasting models or alumni surveys (ibid, p 12). Moreover, labour unions can play an important role in such research in tripartite discussion models, for example in the setting of occupational standards in Poland, Hungary and Slovenia (ibid, p 23).

In the literature, these models are not uncontroversial. The World Bank is the biggest enemy of 'manpower requirements forecasting', stating that the models are based on wrong assumptions on economic behaviour. For the Bank, the relationship between labour and the quantity of goods produced and between labour productivity and the level of education are not fixed. Another problem it identifies is that there are also methodological problems, as it is hard to find the right information (Middleton et al 1993, p 137). A final fundamental concern is that the skills projections are likely to be more inaccurate if they project further into the future. However, at the same time, a long term future projection will always be needed if the education system is to be changed. Before the first generation of students finishes in new programmes, a few years will already have passed before the policy will have had effect. In the meantime, labour market needs might have already drastically changed.

Implications for EI

For EI, this discussion raises interesting questions of policy. While EI is generally sceptical towards tying education systems too closely to the perceived needs of employers and the labour market, the importance of that dimension cannot be underestimated. Therefore, the links between the two should be further discussed as policy is developed. Secondly, skills forecasting should be addressed as a policy issue as it is a macro-economic tool that can unduly influence content of VET programmes. Finally, it must be realised that because of the strong labour market involvement in VET, other labour unions are concerned about its outcomes as well. Connection will therefore have to be sought with the other Global Union Federations, which might already have policies on the topic as they have been involved in discussions through ILO. However first of all, representatives of teachers, staff and students will have to be involved in these discussions.

4. The Place of Teachers in VET

A UNESCO study from 1973 addressing teacher education explains that “the technical and vocational teacher occupies a most important place in modern society: he is the link between industrial society – the ‘real’ world – and the educational system. He is uniquely placed for contributing to the goals of binding humanism and technology,” (UNESCO 1973, p 14). However, at the same time, there is a problem of status, which must be resolved in order to attract the best people to the job. Grollmann and Rauner see the question of status as the ‘core paradox’, as while vocational teachers and trainers are essential to supporting skills development in the workforce, they are not of high status for this role. (...) The ‘parity of esteem’ between vocational and general education is still wishful thinking but could never be established (Grollmann and Rauner 2007, p 1-2). The World Bank generally agrees, explaining that the requirements for instructors in VET are higher than those for general education, and they are costly to develop or attract. Good teachers have pedagogical and technical skills, are trained in teacher education institutions, and have experience in the labour market. Consequently, teachers will often be qualified for higher-paying positions outside of education and training, making them costly to retain (Middleton et al 1993, p 195-196). The literature, then, addresses two main problems. The first one is a question of who the teacher really is, as different profiles can be identified. Secondly, there is a question of teacher training and recruitment. Even though there are many more questions to be asked, on conditions of work, career paths or salaries, they are currently not being answered by the literature, making it hard to address these questions in this review. Therefore, also in this field, EI will have many contributions to make.

Who is the Teacher?

As VET is offered in many different schools, as well as outside of formal education, there are different types of teachers that can be identified both within and between systems. Grollmann and Rauner identify six different teaching profiles based on comparative analysis in ten countries. Other studies add or omit one or two categories, but seeing that the study is recent and quite comprehensive one, these categories could be seen as comprehensive:

1. Teachers or Lecturers working in formal school or college settings and giving instruction in vocational courses;
2. Instructors and laboratory assistants working in school or college settings in vocational labs;
3. Others who teach with a high degree of autonomy or sometimes act as assistants to other vocational teachers;
4. Trainer, tutors and others in enterprises who integrate training and education functions into their jobs with varying degrees (from incidental to full-time teaching of trainees and apprentices). In dual systems, this function is often separated from HRD functions within companies, while in others this distinction is not strongly maintained;
5. Instructors and trainers working in labour market training institutions supported by governments and public authorities, often with a strong focus on social inclusion and basic occupational competences;
6. Instructors and trainers working in employers’ organisations, such as chambers of commerce, sectoral training institutions or privately-run training companies and providers that focus on upgrading of technical competences, training in communication skills, etc (Grollmann and Rauner 2007).

The first three are probably the most relevant for EI, as they work in formal school settings, while the others are active in the general labour market, for example in large enterprises. However, within the first three categories, large differences can still be imagined. The definitions say little about the type of public institutions in which work is offered, at which level these people work, with which types of backgrounds and which types of qualifications. Moreover, the definitions say

little about instructors who are generally based in enterprises, but teach at public institutions part-time. Hopefully then, EI can come up with a better overview over teachers in VET.

How is the Teacher Trained and Recruited?

The Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers from 1966 applies to all teachers, including VET. The Revised UNESCO/ILO Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training consequently states that teachers in VET should have the same status as their colleagues in general education. Consequently, preparation for technical and vocational teaching should 'preferably be offered as a tertiary programme'. In addition, several in-service and lifelong learning arrangements should be in place to give teachers access to possibilities to update their knowledge and competences (UNESCO/ILO 2001, 81-87). However, also in teacher education, different realities exist. Broadly, four models are identified:

1. A model mainly based on the recruitment of practitioners of a certain field of occupational work, who complete additional courses in teaching and training, management techniques usually leading to a teaching certificate, which provides the necessary qualification for the work in the education sector.
2. A model which is based on sequence of studying the subject matter, e.g. on the B.A. level and then obtaining an appropriate entry qualification to the education sector through acquiring general teaching skills in a designated course programme.
3. A model which is based on the concurrent study of a subject matter and educational sciences leading to B.A. or M. A. degree. Often the subject matter takes the form of a diminished portion of the ordinary business or engineering degree. Sometimes special vocational didactics are added.
4. The last model is based on an integrated conception of vocational disciplines, which entail the subject matter as derived from the world of work (i.e. not from the respective engineering discipline) and a model of competence development within this domain (Grollmann and Rauner 2007, p 17).

Here, it must be realised again that the ideal training for the vocational teacher will take more time than that for a general secondary teacher, due to the need for practical experience (UNESCO 1973, p 98).

In the case of VET, it is hard to separate problems of teacher education from recruitment. In the study from 1973, UNESCO concludes that vocational and workshop teachers are usually recruited from one of three groups: well-qualified workers and technicians in employment, secondary technical or general school-leavers, or teachers of general subjects, usually of basic science or mathematics who, through in-service courses, are converted to vocational teachers (UNESCO 1973, p 86). This diversity in recruitment practices leads some to conclude there is a 'fundamental dilemma' between recruitment and the practices of teaching and learning. There is either a highly professionalised model of teacher education and recruitment, associated with a strong alienation from the world of work. Or there is an 'ad hoc'-model of recruitment based on experience in the field, leading to occupational localism or strong subject based identities (Grollmann and Rauner 2007, p 11-12). In this context, it can be questioned what the effect will be of the OECD recommendation, in a forthcoming study, that pedagogical requirements should be lowered when recruiting people from industry as these may "discourage people in mid-career from entering VET," (OECD forthcoming, p 34). Such proposals, while addressing a problem on the short term, will lead to less qualified teachers, without the necessary pedagogical skills to teach a new workforce. The OECD policy then seems at odds with an earlier UNESCO analysis that concluded "standards of qualifications must be set, programmes geared to the needs of various groups of recruits developed, and the status and pay of vocational and workshop teachers raised," (UNESCO, 1973, p 87).

Implications for EI

The first obvious implication for EI is that there are plenty of blanks in the literature which can be filled with observations on the position of teaching personnel. It is helpful that this problem is already identified in the literature, giving a space to intervene. The survey might be a useful instrument to make a first contribution. Secondly, EI will also face a problem of defining which teachers it wishes to represent. While it defends a public system, many vocational teachers will fall outside that scope of work. In the survey, this problem has been taken into account to some extent, although not all the types of teachers mentioned above have been used. This will therefore most likely become an issue of policy as well. Secondly however, EI should develop a clear vision of what types of qualifications teachers in the VET sector should have and how teachers should be recruited. It is hard to generalise by saying that all teachers should have an academic qualification, as these are often unavailable and are perhaps not always needed. At the same time, some international institutions (such as the OECD) doubt the need for proper teaching qualifications. Like in other sectors of education, this could become a major policy debate.

Conclusion

This literature review has been a first attempt to summarise the main academic debates on VET. It has become clear that VET suffers from a lack of clear definition. It is offered in many different levels and ways, and varies according to the ways the local labour market is organised. Consequently, it suffers from a competition in status with general academic education, coming out as a kind of 'second choice' education. This problem is underlined by the approach taken by the international development community, which has prioritised general education as well as promoted an agenda of privatisation for VET. For EI, this is partly a comfortable conclusion, as it strengthens EI's concerns that this sector is particularly vulnerable to pressures of globalisation, commercialisation and trade liberalisation. At the same time, it challenges EI to start the work. It must define what a strong and public VET system really means. Equally, some tough discussions should be started about the relation between VET and the Education For All agenda, in which EI plays a crucial role. The relation between education and the labour market as well as the place of teaching personnel will be other points to clarify. Summarising, we are back to what the task-force on VET has recommended in 2007 already, that *'Education International makes vocational education and training a more prominent component of its ongoing program work (Education International 2007b)'*.

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Draft EI Policy Statement on VET

Goals and Objectives of Vocational Education and Training

1. Education International affirms that vocational education and training (VET) like all education is a human right. The full participation of citizens in the social, cultural, political and economic life of their communities is facilitated by the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired through education and training. All individuals should enjoy equal access to VET without discrimination and without ability to pay being a barrier to their participation.
2. Governments and educational authorities, in cooperation with social partners, should ensure that the right to education and training is universally accessible. Employers have a responsibility to ensure that their employees have adequate opportunities and support to pursue VET.
3. EI affirms that education and training is critical to the self-development of individuals. As stated in the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, “[e]ducation shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”
4. VET should provide individuals with relevant skills to that meet the demand of modern workplaces, but also with general knowledge that prepares them as active citizens. As expressed in the UNESCO *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989)* : “Technical and vocational education programmes should meet the technical requirements of the occupational sectors concerned and also provide the general education necessary for the personal and cultural development of the individual and include, inter alia, social, economic and environmental concepts relevant to the occupation concerned.”
5. VET should be available to individuals at all stages of life to support lifelong learning. For young people, VET should provide entry level qualifications that prepare them for citizenship and work. Existing workers should be able to access VET throughout their working life in order to enable them to enhance their skills and to progress in their vocations, or to pursue to alternative vocational opportunities. VET should also provide pathways for individuals who wish pursue further and higher education.
6. VET should also provide enhanced opportunities for those who have not been successful in primary or secondary school and for those who are marginalized or economically disadvantaged. VET can help ameliorate these social disadvantages by ensuring that all individuals have access to entry level qualifications, through literacy and numeracy and general education programs, and also by providing opportunities for those who are disadvantaged in order to assist them into better and more secure jobs and into further and higher education.

Financing and Administration of Vocational Education and Training

7. Education at all levels is devoted to human development and the progress of society. As such, EI asserts that education — including vocational education and training — is a public good. Educational systems and institutions should be governed by public service principles of public responsibility, transparency, quality, accessibility and equality of opportunity.

8. As a public good, VET is a collective responsibility. Governments have the primary role to play in funding and regulating a comprehensive and high quality vocational education system that is widely accessible.
9. In times of economic difficulties, increased public funding for VET is of key importance. Economic recessions can prompt employers, in jurisdictions where they have been expected to support the delivery of VET, to reduce their contributions. It is the responsibility of governments to ensure adequate funding.
10. Insufficient public funding of VET in many countries has resulted in significantly increased costs for students and workers. Tuition and other student fees, where they exist, should preferably be eliminated, but in all cases kept as low as possible so that they do not constitute a barrier to accessing VET. Governments primarily, but employers also, should provide adequate income and social support to individuals participating in VET.
11. The failure of many governments to adequately fund VET has also led to the growth of private and for-private delivery. EI deplores this trend and asserts that VET should be provided primarily through public institutions. The private and for-profit provision of vocational education is driven mainly by financial and commercial imperatives, rather than educational, skills formation, equity or public policy objectives. In many cases, resources are diverted from the direct delivery of education to administration and marketing, and cost-reduction is given higher priority than quality improvement. Private providers view VET as a commodity and not a social good, and cannot therefore provide the full breadth and depth of education and training needed to meet the range of social, economic and personal development objectives of VET.

Employment and Professional Rights of Vocational Education and Training Teachers

12. Qualified teachers, including instructors and trainers, are fundamental to the provision of quality VET. VET teachers must be appropriately rewarded and recognised for the skills and qualifications they have developed in the workplace as well as for their skills and qualifications as teachers.
13. The remuneration and employment conditions of VET teachers should be such that it is possible to recruit and retain highly qualified staff in their areas of competence. Salaries should reflect the important contributions VET teachers make to society and compare favourably with salaries paid in other occupations requiring similar or equivalent qualifications.
14. VET teachers should be recognized as having the same status as colleagues in other education sectors. In this regard, the *1966 UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers* should apply with respect to their career preparation, remuneration, social security, and their rights and responsibilities.
15. VET teachers should enjoy internationally recognized labour and professional rights, including the right to form and join trade unions and to bargain collectively.
16. VET teachers should enjoy stability and security of tenure in the profession. Teachers should be adequately protected against arbitrary action affecting their professional standing or career. The unnecessary use of fixed-term employment contracts and other precarious forms of employment should be discouraged.
17. VET teachers are dual professionals. They are both professional teachers and professionals within a specific subject/trade/craft/skill. Governments and VET providers

should provide teachers with all necessary support, during pre-service training and throughout their in-service careers, to pursue professional development opportunities so that they may acquire, update and enhance both their technical skills and knowledge within their area of competence, and their pedagogical and teaching skills.

18. VET teachers should have the opportunity to be actively engaged in technical research in their field. VET teachers should be given access to appropriate facilities and resources, and be provided a reasonable teaching load in order to pursue these activities.
19. VET teachers should enjoy professional freedom, including exercising the primary role over the selection of teaching materials, pedagogical techniques and evaluation methods. Teachers and their organizations should be involved in the development and assessment of new programs, courses, and educational resources.
20. There should be equal employment and career opportunities for VET staff and no discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation or identity, disability, language, religion, political or other opinions, economic status or on any other grounds.

Governance of Vocational Education and Training

21. Although governments have the primary responsibility for the funding and administration of VET, all relevant stakeholders should be actively involved in the design and delivery of VET. There should be an effective and equal partnership between public authorities, institutions and providers, employers' organizations, professional associations, trade unions, VET teachers, and student organizations.
22. At the institutional level, VET teachers and students should enjoy effective and meaningful representation on decision-making bodies.
23. Policies and programs designed to assess and enhance the quality of VET should be established with the involvement of VET teachers. Such assessments should include a focus on: ratios of teaching and training staff to students and learners; access to quality teaching materials and resources; safety precautions for all learning and training environments; and the adequacy of physical facilities including buildings, libraries, classrooms, workshops, and equipment.

The International Dimension of Vocational Education and Training

24. The sharing of knowledge and skills, and the mobility of students and teachers across borders is important to the development of VET and should be encouraged. However, this international exchange should be fair and should be based on educational values, not commercial imperatives.
25. The cross-border supply of VET should not be regulated by bilateral, regional or international trade agreements like the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). These commercial agreements have the effect of locking-in and intensifying the pressures of privatization and commercialization while reducing the policy space that educational authorities require in order to regulate VET in the public interest.
26. VET should help individuals acquire portable qualifications that are recognized nationally or internationally, rather than narrow skills developed for specific workplaces.

To achieve this, trade unions need to be involved with employers and VET teachers in developing nationally and internationally recognized vocational education qualifications.

27. Governments, in consultation with trade unions, employers and VET teachers, should develop open and transparent procedures for the fair and timely recognition of qualifications of immigrants and refugees.
28. The cross-border supply of vocational education must respect local curricula and cultural and linguistic specificities.
29. Cross-border on-line training programs, when done properly, can be useful supplements to traditional VET practices and provide for greater access for individuals not able to attend classroom setting. However, from a pedagogical point of view, e-learning can never be a substitute for in-class instruction or direct contact with a teacher. On-line VET should not be used to deskill the work of teachers through the fragmentation and segmentation of tasks.
30. Providers of dubious quality are using cross-border internet-based education and training to cut costs by undermining teachers' working conditions, particularly in off-shore provision. These providers routinely by-pass established quality and audit procedures. Governments, in consultation with VET teachers and other stakeholders, should cooperate to develop appropriate regulatory mechanisms to protect students from rogue providers.
31. While globalization has facilitated the international mobility of students and teachers, this has had a devastating impact on many developing countries. The "brain drain" of highly skilled individuals from the developing to the developed world threatens to further hollow out the vocational education systems of poorer countries. Moreover, demographic trends and the emergence of a skills shortage in many developed countries, threatens to exacerbate the brain drain. EI believes that developed countries should consider ways of mitigating the impact of the brain drain, such as offering financial compensation and by assisting in the development of domestic capacity in affected countries.



ETUCE Position Paper on the European Qualifications Framework

ETUCE Position Paper on the proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (COM(2006)479)

Adopted by the Executive Board in their meeting on 30-31 October 2006

The ETUCE Executive Board adopted in December 2005 a statement in contribution to the Europe-wide consultation process held on an outline of the EQF in the second half of 2005. In response to the formal recommendation for an EQF set forward by the Commission on 5 September 2006, ETUCE wishes to bring forward the following points:

ETUCE confirms its support for the idea behind establishing an EQF and its aim of promoting mobility, lifelong learning, and recognition of competences acquired in nonformal and informal learning settings. ETUCE reiterates that it is important to maintain a clear outlook on what respectively the EQF and the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) can do: the main function of the EQF will be to promote mobility, while the aims of promoting lifelong learning and recognition of non-formal and informal learning need comprehensive policy strategies at national level, alongside the development of NQFs where appropriate.

Although ETUCE notes improvements in comparison to the outline of the EQF presented in 2005, a number of concerns remain.

The EQF descriptors

The link between the Bologna Framework of Qualifications and the EQF is still unclear. ETUCE notes that the recommendation explicitly states that the two qualification frameworks are compatible (p. 14), but documentation for the claimed compatibility is missing. Existing levels of compatibility should be documented in a Commission explanatory note, and the measures proposed to strengthen compatibility should be set out more specifically.

It is not clear how high-level qualifications within Vocational Education and Training will rank in comparison to qualifications achieved within Higher Education. As it stands now, ETUCE in principle regards the frameworks as two separate frameworks - the EQF and the Bologna Framework. The consequences of having two different frameworks must be analysed. The existence of two different frameworks will be very difficult to explain to users, institutions and society at large.

The simplification of the descriptors in the third category of 'learning outcomes' regarding personal competences is welcomed. The category now describes competences in terms of responsibility and autonomy in relation to study and/or work situations. However, this narrowing of the competence category should be explicit throughout the text. Accordingly, the wording "competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy" (p. 17 and annex I) should be supplemented by "in relation to study and/or work situations".

The referencing of a given qualification to the EQF still seems to lack flexibility. The three categories of learning outcomes can only be related to a given qualification in a horizontal manner, as a qualification can only be ascribed to one level on the EQF as a whole. This presupposes that a low level of learning outcome in terms of knowledge and skills necessarily goes hand in hand with a low level of learning outcome in terms of competences, i.e. responsibility and autonomy. ETUCE acknowledges the complexity of developing a tool such as the EQF, but reminds that the EQF levels must reflect the reality; otherwise it will not be used in practice.

It might also be worth clarifying that the fact that the EQF contains rather basic levels of learning outcomes (level 1-3) do not signify that such levels should be recognised as a professional qualification in Member States, where this is not the case today. The question of whether a qualification ascribed to a given EQF level gives access to further education or gives the right to exercise a profession is strictly a national matter.

Ensuring the diversity of education and training systems in the EU

The diverse systems of education and training in the EU are a real asset and should be maintained. As is also recognised in the draft recommendation, the diversity of the education systems and the way in which they are embedded in the different labour market systems enables rapid adjustments to changes in skills needs. ETUCE finds that the introductory text of the recommendation for an EQF (p. 3) should also contain a reference to the cultural and social assets of maintaining diverse education systems. If education systems are only assessed from the point of view of labour market needs in a global perspective, there is a real danger that the diversity of education systems would be considered an obstacle rather than an asset.

ETUCE strongly supports the diversity of the education systems in the EU and stresses that there is a need at all levels to ensure that the EQF and the creation of national qualifications frameworks will not lead to a process of harmonisation of the structure of the education systems. In particular, it must be ensured that the design of the EQF will not play too dominant a role in the development of NQFs. Considering that the recommendation to establish NQFs, where appropriate, is part of the added value of the EQF, the NQFs must first and foremost serve the national context and the national objectives, the specific needs at national level in terms of promoting lifelong learning and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The linking of the NQFs to the EQF is important but should be secondary to these national processes.

Equally, the development of NQFs must in no way lead to a utilitarian approach to the national education systems, in which the education system is merely tailored to the needs of the labour market. While educating a country's citizens to the labour market evidently is a crucial function of the national education system, it must be remembered that education and training systems serve a wide range of social, personal, cultural, and democratic purposes in today's society. The development of NQFs must be a practical tool to compare qualifications within a country's education and training system, including qualifications obtained by certifying learning obtained in non-formal and informal settings, but nothing more and nothing less.

Learning outcome approach and credibility

ETUCE finds that the focus on learning outcomes is necessary in the EQF in order to allow international comparisons of qualifications, but stresses that a too overtly recommendation to Member States to focus on learning outcomes in the development of NQFs might risk leading to standardisation and harmonisation. In this light, the sentence (p. 15) "Use an approach based on learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications (...)" should be changed to: "Use an approach which takes into account learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications". The question of whether a purely learning outcome-based approach could gain credibility needs to be given further consideration. The duration, the content and the institutional setting of a given course of education are evidently of crucial importance.

The question is how a purely outcome-based approach will be received in countries which have a long tradition of including access criteria, content, and duration when assessing the level of a given qualification within their national qualifications systems. Would it e.g. be possible to have the same outcome description for teacher education programmes with durations of respectively 3 and 6 years?

Equally, a purely learning outcome-based approach in relation to validation of nonformal and informal learning at national level seems also hypothetical. In France and Belgium, where they have recently further developed their systems and regulations for validation of competences obtained in non-formal and informal settings, the assessment of a person's competences is supplemented by a jury-evaluation of a portfolio specifying where and during which periods the candidate has obtained his/her competences². In Finland, which together with France is one of the countries with a long tradition of validation of non-formal and informal learning, the validation system involves different categories of competence-based qualifications depending on, among other factors, the number of years of work experience³. In summary, ETUCE acknowledges that a learning outcome-based approach is needed for international comparisons, but stresses that the recommendation for the EQF should recognise that the development of NQFs requires careful consideration of both learning input and output.

While ETUCE fully supports promotion of recognition of informal and non-formal learning, it must be noted that this should not lead to the promotion of fragmented non-formal and informal learning situations taking attention away from the value of acquiring knowledge and skills within a comprehensive formal setting.. Neither should the focus on promotion of non-formal and informal learning lead to a reduction in the focus on the paramount importance of achieving a high level of initial education from the very beginning.

The development of a European Credit Transfer System within Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) has the potential to play a significant role in raising credibility and mutual trust in comparing levels of VET qualifications. However, as the development of the ECVET is merely in a phase of first consultation, ETUCE finds that the recommendation for the EQF must contain a remark that the link between the ECVET and the EQF is conditional upon the outcome of a political decision on the ECVET. It is precarious, as is done in the draft text, to describe the ECVET as an important initiative, which the EQF should take forward (p. 4), considering that no political debate or dialogue with stakeholders on the design of the ECVET have taken place yet.

Quality assurance

The success of the EQF depends on whether it brings about a greater degree of mutual trust between the Member States. Quality assurance in linking the national qualification systems to the EQF is obviously crucial to establish mutual trust between countries. ETUCE welcomes that the recommendation for the EQF contains principles for quality assurance in annex II, but stresses that there are several problematic aspects. Firstly, it should be made clear that the principles are minimum requirements and that they should be considered subject to further development. Secondly, the principles should not state, as they do in the draft text, that quality assurance should give emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes: if an outcome-based approach in the EQF is to gain credibility, we precisely need the quality assurance mechanisms to give equal emphasis to input, context, process and output dimensions. Thirdly, a wider debate is needed of whether the EQF can really gain credibility without a central coordination agency at EU level for quality assurance in linking NQFs to the EQF. This role is foreseen for the European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group, but it should be debated whether a separate European expert agency should assist the EQF Advisory Group in this work. Fourthly, it should be added in annex II that quality assurance agencies should be underpinned by a public commitment and be reviewed by public authorities.

² Commission Staff Working Document: Annex to the 2006 Joint Council and Commission Progress Report on implementation of Education and Training 2010.

³ See the European Inventory for validation of non-formal and informal learning: www.ecotec.com/europeaninventory

Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks

ETUCE stresses that sectoral qualifications frameworks should firstly be related to the regional or national qualifications systems or frameworks, and then secondly to the EQF, not the reverse.

Implementation of the EQF

With regard to the implementation of the EQF, ETUCE is pleased to note that a number of demands put forward in the ETUCE statement from December 2005 have been met in the new proposal, including:

- A recommendation to involve national social partners in the work of the national centers designated to coordinate the implementation of the EQF in each country;
- the setting up of a European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group, including representatives of the European social partners, to monitor, coordinate and to ensure the quality and overall coherence of the process of relating national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework;
- an evaluation and possible review of the EQF after a period of 5 years. In relation to this latter point, ETUCE however stresses that evaluation should be undertaken on a regular basis in the EQF Advisory Group, in preparation of an overall evaluation after the first 5 years.

However, ETUCE underlines that the proposed time schedule indicating that Member States shall relate their national qualification systems/frameworks to the EQF by 2009 is too ambitious, and will pose problems in the light of planned reforms in several countries during 2007-2008. In order to ensure a sustainable development of the NQFs, the implementation of the EQF should be embedded in a realistic time schedule. One of the added values of the EQF is precisely that the development of NQFs can bring about coherence in national qualification systems in countries where this is not the case today, but this in turn requires that national authorities are given the time to develop their own national qualification frameworks suitable to their national context, in a dialogue with social partners and other stakeholders, and not just implement a copy of the EQF.

ETUCE emphasises that it is important to ensure that the concepts and definitions embedded in the EQF are understood in the same sense in the different countries. The EQF Advisory Group has an important role to play in this regard. In addition, ETUCE stresses that the implementation of the EQF must be placed under the responsibility of the Ministers of Education.



ETUCE STATEMENT on ECVET

ETUCE statement on the Commissions proposal for a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) *adopted by the ETUCE Executive Board in their meeting of 11-12 November 2008*

In April 2008 the European Commission presented their formal proposal for a “European Credit transfer for Vocational Education and Training”. ETUCE conducted an internal consultation amongst its affiliate member organisations in the relations to the Commissions initial process on ECVET and another following the Commissions presentation of the formal proposal. The present paper builds on the conclusions of both consultations.

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 110 teachers’ unions in the EU and EFTA countries and more than 5.5 million teachers from all levels of the education sector. As a European Social Partner in education at EU level, the ETUCE is a member of the ETCG.

ETUCE supports the objective of the Commission’s proposal on ECVET, e.g. the facilitation of mobility between different learning contexts and the promotion of lifelong learning. If ECVET succeeds in bridging different learning contexts and enabling the proper recognition of non-formal and informal learning, it will represent an added value in many countries. However, ETUCE must stress that the added value of ECVET depends on the recognition, by the Commission, of a number of different challenges facing the implementation and use of ECVET.

The main challenges and issues, ETUCE urges the Commission to acknowledge and address, are described in the following:

ECVET: an added value

The added value of ECVET is first and foremost challenged by the risk of it leading to a rise in bureaucracy. ETUCE stresses, that ECVET must be as simple and practical a tool as possible. Keeping ECVET free of unnecessary rules and recommendations serves several purposes, which are all critical for the success of ECVET. First, there is a risk, that a disproportionate increase in administrative and bureaucratic burdens for the education providers and professionals would move resources from teaching to administration. Second, heavy administrative burdens will make it harder for ECVET to gain the necessary support from the education providers. Third, ensuring that ECVET is a simple and transparent tool would also make it easier for the different European vocational education and training frameworks to link-up to it. The large differences in the structure, traditions and methods of the European VET frameworks require a simple and practical structure of ECVET. Furthermore it is important to have precise and concise definitions of terms like learning outcomes and Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to ensure that they are not understood to have different meanings in different contexts and frameworks. Guides and/or manuals should be available for the future users and managers of ECVET nationally.

ECVET as a tool for assessment and transfer of credit not a means of harmonisation

ECVET must remain a tool, the Member States can implement and use on their own accord. While it is to be expected that ECVET will bring about changes in the national credit transfer and assessment systems, ECVET must not be a harmonising and/or standard-setting scheme, monitored by the Commission. ECVET should ensure the transparency and compatibility of European training and education systems, but not threaten the positive diversity of these. Especially since vocational education and training entails a combination of theory and practice, and

since this combination differs from country to country, it is important that ECVET does not force through changes of the national theory/practice combinations.

Clear positioning of ECVET in relations to other European education initiatives

ETUCE believes it to be very important that ECVET is placed clearly in context with the European Quality Framework, the National Quality Frameworks and Europass. These links between ECVET and the other European initiatives on education must be clearly defined for the national users and managers of ECVET. Clear links between ECVET and the rest of the European educational initiatives can also serve to decrease the lack of trust between the national education and training systems, related to the lack of insight in the systems and frameworks of one another. Building the trust between European VET players is, however, not a challenge, that can be sufficiently handled by a clear definition of ECVETs links to other European education initiatives. Further action such as, for example, independent and controlled quality assurance, is needed to promote trust between the different national VET systems. The timetables for the implementation of ECVET should reflect the need for time for the trust-building institutions and mechanisms to function and to promote the trust needed for ECVET to function. It is, however, important to note that the relationship between education partners cannot be based on mutual trust alone.

ECVET and its role in lifelong learning

ETUCE emphasises that ensuring lifelong learning does not solely hinge upon the assessment and transfer of education credits between learning contexts. The most important tools to ensure the quality of, and access to, VET in the Member states are still solid and coherent national strategies for the vocational education and training in each national setting. There is no doubt that ECVET can serve as a contribution but certainly not as an alternative to the national strategies for ensuring and expanding the learning opportunities for the Europeans.

Involvement of the national social partners in the national implementation of ECVET remains an important step to ensure the coherence of ECVET in the Member States.

The ETUCE supports the proposal on ECVET, but urges the Commission to take the above mentioned issues into account and to continue informing and involving the ETUCE, as the social partner for teachers, on this topic.

EI Guidelines on the Cross-Border Provision of Vocational Education and Training (Adopted at EI 5th World Congress, Berlin, 2007)

Introduction

Education International has long been concerned about the growing threats posed to education at all levels as a result of economic globalization and trade liberalization. Vocational education and training (VET)⁴ is particularly vulnerable to these pressures. Once the primary responsibility of public institutions in many countries, the provision of vocational education and training now straddles the public, private and for-profit sectors. Meanwhile, the growing cross-border provision of VET is increasingly governed by commercial imperatives and subject to the rules of trade agreements like the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

The cross-border provision of vocational education and training refers to the movement of students, staff, providers, curricula, and services across national borders. Historically, cross-border VET was characterized primarily by development cooperation projects, and staff and student exchange programs. Today, however, commercial initiatives are a major feature of cross-border VET. This raises new issues and challenges for governments and for education stakeholders. At the Fourth World Congress in Porto Alegre, Brazil in July 2004, Education International established a task force on globalization and vocational education and training to explore these issues and challenges. The task force presented its initial report and recommendations to the EI Executive Board in October 2006. The report asserted that the internationalization of education should be encouraged insofar as it advances knowledge and promotes cooperation and development. However, the task force emphasized that this cross-border exchange should be firmly based on educational values, and not commercial ones. Consequently, it was recommended that EI develop a set of guidelines for the cross-border provision of vocational education and training that, in contrast to GATS and similar trade agreements, would promote quality, accessibility, equity, and protections for the status and employment rights of staff.

The draft guidelines presented below are intended to address and counterbalance the threats posed by trade and investment agreements, not only to staff jobs and living standards, but to the quality of education and training students receive. If regulated solely on the basis of commercial rules, the cross-border provision of VET will undermine the character of education as a public good delivered through public institutions and on public service principles. The proposed guidelines, by contrast, are structured around the basic principle that education is a public good. The guidelines set out the conditions necessary to ensure that governments, institutions, staff and students have the means to determine, from an educational standpoint and on the basis of their own conditions and circumstances, the policies that are needed to ensure the preservation and promotion of quality, accessibility and relevance in VET

⁴ Alternative terms used internationally include technical and vocational education and training (TVET), vocational and technical education and training (VTET), technical and vocational education (TVE), vocational and technical education (VTE), and further education and training (FET).

Principles and Objectives

1. Education at all levels is devoted to human development and the progress of society. As such, education, including vocational education and training⁵, should be viewed as a public good and not a private commodity. VET, provided locally or across borders, should be governed by strong public service principles that emphasize accountability, quality, access and equality of opportunity.
2. Governments should continue to play the lead role in funding and regulating a comprehensive, accessible and high quality vocational education system. The cross-border provision of VET should not be used as a means for governments to abdicate their responsibilities.
3. In all cases, education and training should provide individuals with a range of knowledge and skills that allow them to not only pursue meaningful work and adapt to changing occupational demands, but also to participate fully in all aspects of social life. As stated in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."
4. Vocational education and training should never be focussed solely and narrowly on the training of individuals for specific labour market tasks. It should, in addition to assisting students with the acquisition of practical skills, provide them with general knowledge and understanding. According to the UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989): *Technical and vocational education programmes should meet the technical requirements of the occupational sectors concerned and also provide the general education necessary for the personal and cultural development of the individual and include, inter alia, social, economic and environmental concepts relevant to the occupation concerned.*
5. The sharing of knowledge and skills, and the mobility of students and staff across borders is important to the development of vocational and technical education and should be encouraged. However, this international exchange and cooperation should be fair, should be sensitive to local needs, and should be based on educational values, not commercial imperatives.
6. The cross-border provision⁶ of VET should give priority to international cooperation between the North and South, as well as between countries of the South, in order to build and sustain the capacity of vocational education systems in the developing world.

⁵ For the purposes of these guidelines, "vocational and technical education" refers to all forms and levels of the educational process involving, in addition to general knowledge, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, know-how, attitudes and understanding relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life.

⁶ For the purposes of these guidelines, cross-border provision of VET refers to the movement of students, staff, institutions/providers, programs, curricula and other VET services across national jurisdictional boundaries. It includes the cross-border supply of VET services through distance education and e-learning, and the establishment of offshore branch schools and franchising in other jurisdictions.

Accreditation and quality assurance

7. Cross-border provision of VET should respect the accreditation, recognition, and quality assurance requirements and procedures established by the relevant local authorities. Standards and criteria that have been established at the national level should be strengthened to take into account the cross-border provision of VET, and not diluted. Teachers must be included as essential partners in the development of these standards, along with other stakeholders.
8. At the institutional level, the primary importance of staff input into the determination of quality in the development, delivery and assessment processes of cross-border VET should be recognised.
9. Notwithstanding the provisions in trade and investment agreements to which they are a party, governments and relevant authorities should retain the right to maintain, adopt, and enforce measures related to qualification requirements and procedures, accreditation requirements and procedures, and quality assurance standards with respect to the VET sector.

Locally relevant content

10. Cross-border provision of VET should not be used to produce, promote or justify a standardization of curricula, materials or methods. There should be clear and effective protections for national, regional and indigenous cultures, and for the interests and expectations of students and staff. Where curricula, materials or methods used in one country are adapted for use in another, this adaptation should be carefully made with full regard to local conditions and needs, including the need to sustain cultural and linguistic diversity.
11. In all cases, governments and relevant authorities should exercise the right to maintain, adopt and enforce measures to ensure the relevance of VET content and to promote linguistic and cultural diversity. To pursue this goal, governments, institutions and relevant authorities should retain the ability to adopt policies and practices which favour or accord preferences to domestic VET providers.

Mobility of teachers, staff and students

12. The mobility of VET teachers, staff and students across borders should be encouraged when it contributes to the exchange of different types of knowledge, techniques, and pedagogical approaches and builds local capacity. However, policies adopted to promote mobility should not weaken labour market policies and practices, the employment rights of staff, or the rights of trade unions.
13. Governments, institutions and relevant authorities may maintain, adopt or enforce measures that require specified number of members of the governing boards, senior management, and staff of VET institutions be local nationals.
14. The danger of the "brain drain" of staff and students from the developing to the developed world needs to be recognized and explicitly addressed by governments and VET institutions.

When students and staff from developing nations choose to remain in the host country, governments and institutions should provide compensation to the affected country.

Cross-border investment in VET

15. Governments and relevant authorities should retain the right to maintain, adopt, and enforce measures to ensure that VET investment activity, where it is permitted, is undertaken in a manner consistent with domestic priorities and development goals. Where governments permit cross-border investment in VET, they may maintain, adopt or enforce requirements including, but not limited to, the following:
- a) to require a given level or percentage of domestic content in VET;
 - b) to require a specified level or percentage of general education as part of a VET program
 - c) to set quotas and limits on the number of overseas providers permitted to operate in its territory;
 - d) to require overseas providers operating in its territory to provide training to locals, to transfer technology, to provide educational services to disadvantaged communities and groups, and to meet universal service obligations;
 - e) to purchase, use or accord a preference to educational goods produced or VET services provided in its territory; and
 - f) to limit or restrict the type of legal entity permitted to operate in its territory.

Cross-border supply

16. Web-based and on-line VET provided across borders should be offered in ways appropriate to the needs of students, and at the same standard as traditionally delivered VET. It should be recognised that on-line delivery has limited usefulness for some groups of students and for the teaching of some subjects and therefore its use should meet strict criteria. It should be monitored by the relevant authorities, with the power to ensure that quality is maintained.
17. The employment and professional rights of staff working on the development, delivery and assessment of these forms of vocational education and training should be no less than those working in traditional modes, and this should be reflected in accreditation and quality assurance procedures.
18. The use of new technologies in cross-border VET should take account of the disparities in availability of software and hardware and the levels of computer literacy between industrialised and developing countries, and appropriate compensatory measures need to be introduced, taking account of national cultural differences.

Employment rights of staff

19. Quality teaching is made possible by the quality of the teaching force and the quality of their working conditions. The 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and other relevant instruments must be taken into account by all institutions and providers to support good working conditions and terms of service, and to allow opportunities for professional development. These rights should be applied to all teachers partly or wholly employed by crossborder providers.

20. VET teachers and staff partly or wholly employed by cross-border providers should have their employment rights with such providers protected. It should be clear under which national employment regime they are employed, and cross-border arrangements should not be used as a means of undermining the employment rights or job security of employees, or of shifting work from one country to another on the basis of cost.
21. In accordance with the relevant ILO Conventions, the employment and collective bargaining rights of staff employed by cross-border VET providers should be respected and as clearly defined as those of institutions based in a single country. The right of return to the country of origin under no less favourable conditions should be guaranteed to those relocated in another country.

Participants List

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Latvia	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	LIZDA
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