



The European Area of Skills and Qualifications

(+ ESCO, ECVET, Europass developments, and more)

Pages 2-7



The story of Peter the Vintage Car Artisan

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Kurz gesagt

Liebe Leserin, lieber Leser!

Die EU-Kommission hat eine öffentliche Konsultation zum Thema „Europäischer Raum der Kompetenzen und Qualifikationen“ durchgeführt. Diese Konsultation soll bestehende Hindernisse bei der Anerkennung und Transparenz von Kompetenzen und Qualifikationen in Europa sichtbar machen und mögliche Lösungen aufzeigen, aber auch den potentiellen Mehrwert, der durch die Maßnahmen der EU im aktuellen und künftigen wirtschaftlichen und technischen Umfeld gewonnen werden kann. Die Frühlingausgabe des Europass-Magazins bringt Ihnen die wichtigsten Informationen zu dieser Initiative (Seite 2) und zu verwandten Instrumenten wie ESCO (Seite 3) und ECVET (Seite 5-6). Der Schlüssel zum Erreichen der Ziele dieser EU-Maßnahmen ist wohl die Zusammenarbeit der unterschiedlichen Instrumente und Netzwerke – Beispiele dafür finden Sie auf den Seiten 4 und 7.

Und nun: Vorhang auf für Peter, den Oldtimer-Liebhaber! Seine mitreißende Geschichte wird auf Seite 8 bis 9 erzählt; und ja, Peter ist der Bruder des Mechanikers Paul, dessen Geschichte Sie in der Ausgabe Nr. 5 gelesen haben.

Das Europass-Team wünscht Ihnen einen blühenden Frühling. Und falls Sie die Saison mit der Bewerbung für einen interessanten Job beginnen möchten, sehen Sie sich doch den Editor für das neue Europass-Motivationsschreiben auf Seite 10 an!

En bref

Chères lectrices, chers lecteurs,

La Commission européenne vient d'organiser une consultation publique sur un espace européen des compétences et des certifications, afin d'évaluer l'envergure et la nature des obstacles qui entravent la transparence des compétences et des qualifications et leur reconnaissance en Europe. Cette consultation permettra d'élaborer des solutions et d'évaluer la pertinence de l'action de l'Union européenne dans le contexte économique et technologique actuel et futur. Vous trouverez dans ce numéro une description détaillée de cette consultation (page 2) et des instruments concernés tels qu'ESCO (page 3) ou ECVET (pages 5 et 6). L'action de l'UE vise à renforcer la synergie et la cohérence des divers outils, principes et réseaux européens, dont vous découvrirez des exemples en pages 4 et 7.

En pages 8 et 9, découvrez l'histoire passionnante de Peter, un amateur de voitures anciennes. Peter est en vérité le frère de Paul, dont vous avez apprécié les péripéties dans le Magazine Europass No 5.

L'équipe de coordination Europass vous souhaite un très agréable printemps. Si vous profitez des beaux jours pour postuler à un emploi, rendez-vous en page 10: vous saurez tout sur le nouveau module de l'éditeur en ligne Europass, qui vous aidera à rédiger votre lettre de motivation.

The European Area of Skills and Qualifications

The continuing difficulties surrounding the recognition and transparency of skills and qualifications hinder the development of the right mix of skills and qualifications as well as the mobility needed to achieve a better match between skills and jobs to help boost competitiveness and prosperity. The European Commission has collected the views of stakeholders on the problems faced by learners and workers with regard to the transparency and recognition of their skills and qualifications when moving within and between EU Member States, on the adequacy of the related European policies and instruments and on the potential benefits of developing a “European Area of Skills and Qualifications”.

Through the public consultation held between December 2013 and April 2014 the Commission wished to explore the extent and nature of the current obstacles to the recognition and transparency of skills and qualifications across Europe, possible solutions and the potential value added of EU action in the current and future economic and technological context.

The consultation addressed in particular the following issues:

1. How to place a stronger focus on higher and more relevant skills
2. Further strengthening links between education/training, mobility and the labour market
3. Adapting to internationalisation trends
4. Ensuring overall coherence of tools and policies and further implementing the learning outcomes approach
5. Ensuring clarity of rules and procedures for the recognition of skills and qualifications for further learning
6. Increasing the focus on quality assurance
7. Providing learners and workers with a single access point to obtain information and services supporting a European area of skills and qualifications.

The results of the public consultation will feed into a possible Communication that the Commission may launch in 2015, followed by possible revisions of existing European instruments for the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications.

Learn more about the European Area of Skills and Qualifications through:

- » the public consultation website
- » background document with details about the issues addressed



On the following pages we bring examples of how a European Area of Skills and Qualifications is being gradually made a reality through the efforts of the members of the Europass Network as well as other initiatives across Europe.

Continue reading and find out about:

- the development of the European Classification of Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) (p. 3)
- a multi-network conference in Hungary (p. 4)
- the NetECVET project (pp. 5-6)
- a Dutch-lead cooperation with volunteers to make their skills seen and used (p. 7)
- a French multimedia guidance for Europass users (p. 7)

and

the mesmerizing story of Peter the vintage car enthusiast (yes, the brother of Paul the mechanic!), and how Europass helped him become Peter the happy artisan. (pp. 8-9)

ESCO: European Classification of Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations

What is ESCO?

ESCO is the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. It identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training, in 25 European languages. The system provides occupational profiles showing the relationships between occupations, skills, competences and qualifications. ESCO has been developed in an open IT format, is available for use free of charge by everyone and can be accessed through an online portal.

Why ESCO?

To help bridge the gap between the world of education and training and the labour market, the European Commission is developing ESCO. By introducing a standard terminology for occupations, skills, competences and qualifications, ESCO can help education and training systems and the labour market to better identify and manage the availability of required skills, competences and qualifications. Its multilingual character facilitates increased international transparency and cooperation in the area of skills and qualifications.

The financial crisis has hit labour markets throughout the European Union. In June 2013 the overall unemployment rate in the EU stood at 11 %, while youth unemployment rose to more than 23 % and reached more than 55 % in some member states.

In spite of high levels of unemployment, there is strong evidence of skills bottlenecks and mismatches within certain regions and sectors such as the green economy, ICT and healthcare. A globalised economy increases competition not only in relation to labour costs but also in relation to the skills of the workforce. Europe cannot afford to leave skills potential unused.

Getting people into work requires tackling skill shortages and mismatches. Workers need training to meet the needs of the labour market and job matching services need to make the most of available employment opportunities. However, education provides people with qualifications that differ between Member States. Qualifications do not always keep pace with the evolution of knowledge, skills and competences needed by the labour market. Employment services do not share the same IT and classification systems to manage information on the supply and demand of jobs.

What can ESCO do?

- » Facilitate the dialogue between the labour market and the education/training sector
- » Allow employment services to exchange relevant labour market information across borders
- » Boost online and skill-based job matching
- » Facilitate geographical and occupational mobility through semantic interoperability
- » Help employment services in the shift towards a skills and competence-oriented approach
- » Help describe qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and competence
- » Enable the development of innovative career guidance services
- » Help describe learning outcomes acquired in non-formal settings, thus facilitates their validation
- » Ultimately: getting more people into jobs throughout Europe

The very first version of ESCO (Version 0) is already available free of charge to European citizens (find the link in info box on this page). This version will be regularly updated, culminating in ESCO Version 1, with a full revision for all economic sectors expected in 2017. The Europass Network is currently working on the integration of the ESCO Occupations and the ESCO terminology in the Europass CV online tool. In future, the users of the Europass CV will be able to utilise, if they so wish, the pre-defined list of ESCO terminology available in 25 languages while completing their CV. This functionality will allow the users to better match their CV descriptions with the world of work and to use this information for online job matching and other services.

Learn more about ESCO through:

- » the official website
- » the first public release



Europass Network: contributing to making the European Area of Skills and Qualifications a reality

European networks for youth employment – joint conference in Hungary

The idea of organising a joint conference with the participation of the Hungarian Eurodesk, EURES, Euroguidance and Europass networks first arose during the Learning by leaving II conference in Uppsala in 2012. After months of intensive cooperation, the conference titled „Show the way! – European networks for youth employment” took place in Budapest in November 2013.

The event, similarly to the profile of the networks, linked together the theory and practice in the fields of employment, youth and education with the primary objective of sharing the supporting and development tools, methods, programmes and information already available from the EU networks.

The main target group consisted of the colleagues, experts and partners of the networks. Eventually, around 180 participants from both the public and the private sector were present at the event, mainly professionals assisting young people who are about to enter the labour market.

The opening speech was held by Róbert Komáromi, Director of the National Labour Office. He emphasised the importance of giving this opportunity to experts of the four networks to discuss common topics and search for ways to cooperate in the future. Common work and constructive partnerships will be needed, for instance, during the implementation of the Youth Guarantee (on this topic, see also [Europass Magazine no. 5](#)).

László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, held his speech via video message. He noted that the youth unemployment in Europe is a crucial issue that has been a top priority for the EU over the recent years. The Youth Guarantee schemes come at a price yet the cost of doing nothing would be far higher. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has estimated that it would cause an annual loss of 153 billion Euro to the EU as a whole (for the year 2011).



so the results became visual (see the picture).

The participants agreed that young job-seekers need to change their approach, too. In order to find a good workplace they have to be more aware of their own competences and strengths and set clear aims for themselves. On one hand, top-down initiatives are necessary as they can support youngsters in finding jobs on a systemic level. However, young people need to gain the awareness, firmness and creativity to find their way into, and around, the labour market.

As an aftermath of the conference, in 2014 we already realised some of the horizontal synergies between the EU networks. In the spring season the four networks presented themselves together as the “European networks for youth employment” at the biggest job fairs in Hungary, and managed to reach the youth with a new comprehensive approach.

Csilla Szabó | NEC Hungary



The ECVET Mobility Toolkit

Practical support for integrating ECVET into new or existing mobility practice

It has been almost five years since the recommendation on the *establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)* confirmed common ECVET principles, provided detailed technical specifications and recommended the wider promotion and implementation of ECVET by all Member States. In that time, a wide range of bodies and organisations have been involved in translating these core principles and technical specifications into practical processes, and tools, able to be used by vocational education and training practitioners at all levels.

In 2011, a group of 14 National Agencies for the Lifelong Learning Programme came together, under the leadership of the German National Agency (NA BIBB), to form the thematic network NetECVET. NetECVET partners adopted a bottom-up approach in the network, targeting practical solutions for mobility practitioners wishing to introduce ECVET to new or existing mobility practice.

Whilst the latest phase of network activity came to a close at the end of 2013, NetECVET leaves behind a successful legacy in the form of an [ECVET Mobility Toolkit](#). The Toolkit provides an online platform of tools, examples, information and resources to support the gradual introduction of ECVET into new or existing mobility practices.

ECVET assistance for education and training providers

The Toolkit was ultimately designed to assist vocational education and training providers, and others working in the field of transnational mobility, in introducing one or more ECVET principles to existing mobility projects and programmes. Since launching the Toolkit to a wider stakeholder audience (Brussels, October 2013), we expect that many other individuals and organisations working to increase knowledge and awareness on ECVET will also begin to promote and make active use of the Toolkit - an example being those working in national funding agencies and those forming a part of national ECVET teams.

A common frame of reference on 'ECVET and Mobility'

The Toolkit provides a common platform for all vocational education and training actors, in Europe, in the area of ECVET and Mobility. Users can access an introductory section in which the background to, and history of, ECVET is succinctly explained. Alternatively, users can go straight to the core ECVET Toolkit: there they can access dedicated chapters on ECVET Preparation, Partnership Building and Quality Assurance. Users can also work, systematically, through the most important steps associated with the planning, implementation and follow-up of ECVET in Geographical Mobility (Before Mobility, During Mobility and After Mobility).



The Toolkit provides introductory texts, tools, templates, checklists and examples of how to use ECVET in practice. Additional, video interviews show experienced mobility practitioners, from different countries, presenting their own experiences of using ECVET.

Not covered by the Toolkit are more generic mobility topics (non-ECVET), and ECVET-related developments not addressing geographical mobility, with numerous platforms and resources already dedicated to these matters.



ECVET: a step-by-step process towards higher quality mobility

It is important to begin by reflecting on existing mobility practice - consider the importance of international mobility to your learners, what works well in existing mobility practice and how you might further develop your mobility projects and programmes.

Beyond this, start to explore the Toolkit - a user guide is provided to help you navigate your way through and checklists are provided confirming

both key actors and key actions. Ask yourself, along the way, what is new, what needs to change and what additional opportunities ECVET might provide.

In terms of partnership development, it is important to confirm a willingness with (new and existing) partners to experiment with ECVET, to decide which elements of ECVET you might implement together and which other actors might need to participate, embedding this into a common agreement (Memorandum of Understanding).

From an implementation perspective, consider each of the mobility phases (before, during and after mobility) and the changes that that ECVET might require. Use pilot phases to test with actual mobility participants (students, teachers) and make use of the many checklists, tools and examples provided in the Toolkit.

As with all quality-assured processes, it is important to evaluate your experiences with local, national and international partners, and mobility participants, confirming the benefits of ECVET for your mobility project or programme, recognising successes and identifying any areas for future improvement.

Quick access to tools for experienced users

Admittedly, some actors have been working with ECVET in Mobility for a number of years and are already starting to build experience. In this respect, easy access is provided to the tools, examples and further reading that feature within the various chapters of the Toolkit, by simply entering the Tools, Examples and More section. Here, users can quickly work through the different tools and materials, finding that which best serves their ECVET development needs. This section additionally provides a common glossary of key terms and a searchable database of learning outcomes descriptors, the latter building on past-funded ECVET developments in many European countries and sectors.

Paul Guest | Expert Consultant to NetECVET

Rinske Stelwagen | Dutch National Agency for LLP and Erasmus+

Inland Mobility: a tool to record the skills of volunteers

For two years now, the Dutch NEC has been testing the Inland Mobility as a tool to make the skills and competences of volunteers visible and usable. The experience gathered so far has been encouraging. Therefore, a pilot organisation, Scouting Gelderland, has taken the initiative to a next step: providing guidance and support for volunteer organisations that wish to offer a record of skills acquired by their volunteers.

The project partners have invited volunteer organisations to participate in a survey to inform the creation of an inventory recording learning outcomes acquired during volunteering activities. Based on the outcomes of the survey, NEC Netherlands plans to develop and test a series of support and guidance tools for volunteer organisations.

The project is carried out in close cooperation of the Dutch NEC and the European Volunteer Centre. Other project partners involved in the initiative are Education and Social Research Centre (Poland), National University of Ireland, Czech Council of Children and Youth, Pan Cyprian Volunteerism Coordinative Council, and Scouting Gelderland (The Netherlands). The project is based on the Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe, and relates also to the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

For more information, please contact Jo Peeters, project manager, j.peeters@scouting gelderland.nl or Monique Leegte, NEC NL, monique.leegte@duo.nl.

Monique Leegte | NEC Netherlands



New Europass multimedia guidance in France


In 2013, the flagship action in the promotion of Europass by the French NEC was a multimedia tutorial. The product was developed throughout the year in cooperation with a provider. This 13-minute tutorial consists of two parts:

The first part is an animated presentation of the general objectives of Europass illustrated by the example of a young graduate who reflects on what he can do, on his career and the skills he acquired during his training and personal experience. The second part is interactive and gives the user the opportunity to explore one or other of the five Europass documents portfolio in an entertaining as well as guidance-oriented way.

The multimedia is available online on www.europass.fr. Promotion and further exploitation of the tool will continue throughout 2014.

Laurent Lascrou | NEC France

Europe 2020: Peter, his vintage cars and the European tools



This fiction scenario illustrates how strengthening synergy and coherence between the EU tools in the coming years will reinforce their relevance and usefulness to European citizens.

You may remember Paul, his motorcycles and his toolbox (see *Europass Magazine No 5*). Paul had a young brother, called Peter. Peter was also a born mechanic, but interested exclusively in cars. Pre-1960 old timers only. The type of car you sold for nothing twenty years ago and buy for a small fortune now, as it reminds you of the good old times.

Our story started when Peter – nine years old at the time – found in the family garden shed the remains of the lawn mower that had been savagely sabotaged by his elder brother a couple of years earlier. It took him less than two weeks to turn a pile of rusty parts into a noisy, ugly but efficient go-cart prototype.

And although this happened way before the advent of social media, Peter's father was informed in almost real time of his son's talent. More specifically, he received a call from the local police officer, listing the driving offences committed by the gifted young pilot: unregistered vehicle, no driving license, false registration plate (figures drawn by hand on a piece of cardboard), non-approved helmet (a stainless steel colander), parking on a pedestrian zone, etc. But despite his father's reaction, Peter had already got the bug for car mechanics...

Naturally, Peter joined a vocational school to obtain a professional qualification, as his brother had done a few years earlier. However, school was not his cup of tea and he dropped out after one year.

Jim Brooks, the owner of a local garage accepted to hire him on probation. Mr Brooks, a seventy-something old-school mechanic, was actually more interested in his collection of pre-war British old-timers than in servicing the new, mostly Japanese cars of his clients. Handyman Peter quickly became his right-hand in the workshop, doing good turns to customers, spending hours to fine-tune a carburettor ramp, or leaving at any time of day or night with the breakdown lorry to fix the car of the village doctor.

On a quiet spring day of 2018, Jim Brooks passed away while fixing the leather cone clutch of his 1920's convertible MG. Peter inherited Jim's coveted, three-wheel German post-war bubble car. But he had to find a new job. His brother Paul helped him make his [Europass CV](#). However, Peter quickly realised that garage owners were looking for mechanics with formal qualifications. Browsing the freshly launched European portal dedicated to skills and qualifications, he easily found the contact details of the regional authority in charge of validation of non-formal and informal learning. An advisor helped him document his work experience using the [European Skills Passport](#). Members of the board who examined his dossier were impressed by the sum of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences Peter had gained over the years at Jim Brooks' garage. He managed to validate 80% of the learning outcomes required to pass the Automotive Mechanic Qualification.

After six months spent in a vocational school, he proudly obtained his certificate, added it to his European Skills Passport and uploaded it to [Eures](#), the European Jobs Network.

Peter's profile was quickly selected by the owner of a garage specialised in the restoration and repair of British old-timers. He soon proved to have a special gift for leather upholstery. Browsing the [Ploteus](#) portal on Learning Opportunities throughout the European Space, with the help of a [Euroguidance](#) advisor, he found a three-month alternance training in a UK car leather upholstery workshop, where he participated in the restoration of prestigious limousines. His learning experience was recorded on the Europass document designed for this purpose and validated by his mentor.

Back to his home town, Peter decided that he could finally fly solo – or should we say *drive solo?* - and opened his own car seat restoration workshop: *L'atelier du cuir*.

Why a French name? I now realize I forgot to tell you that Peter participated in the 2018 Euroskills Contest. He did not win a medal, but he stole the heart of Bérénice, a young IT technician from Lausanne, Switzerland. They are now the proud parents of Rodolphe, 3-years and half, whose favourite car in his father's collection is, of course, the German bubble car. Rodolphe already knows he wants to be a pilot when he grows up. Needless to say, an acrobatic pilot.

Just like his brother ten years earlier, Peter realised that – along with the passion for his job - the coordinated implementation of European tools proved to be a decisive asset in his career pathway, and helped him become a happy and renowned *artisan*.

Cedefop's Europass team

Learn more about the European tools and principles:

- [Europass](#) - five documents to make skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe
- [Ploteus](#) - the portal on Learning Opportunities throughout Europe
- [Eures](#) - the European Jobs Network
- [Euroguidance](#) - the European network of national resource and information centres for guidance.
- [European Qualifications Framework](#) - a tool to describe and compare levels of national, international or sectoral qualifications
- [ECVET](#) - the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
- [EQAVET](#) - a framework to help EU Member States develop, improve, guide and assess the quality of their vocational education and training systems

News

The Europass cover letter editor is up and running

The Europass cover letter editor is up and running. Users of the Europass editor can now create a [cover letter](#) online.

Main features of this new tool:

- clear and logic structure to help job-seekers draft a clear and concise motivation letter;
- user-friendly online interface with direct preview of the final document;
- Europass graphical identity;
- assistant menu (right click) with wording suggestions.

The screenshot shows the 'Europass online editor' interface. The title bar reads 'Curriculum Vitae – Cover Letter | Compose'. On the left, there is a navigation menu with options: '1. Compose', 'Curriculum Vitae', 'European Skills Passport', 'Language Passport', 'Cover Letter', '2. Save', 'Store data on browser', 'My CV', 'My European Skills Passport', and 'My LP'. The main area is a form for composing a cover letter. It includes fields for 'First name(s) Surname(s)', 'Address', 'Telephone(s)', 'E-mail', and 'Instant messaging'. Below these are sections for 'Contact person', 'City, Date Subject', 'Opening salutation', 'Main content', 'Closing salutation', and 'Enclosures'. Each of these sections has a '+ Fill in' button. There is also an 'Upload signature' button. At the bottom, there are social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Pinterest, along with a 'Legal notice' link and a footer that reads 'Website developed and maintained by Cedefop © European Union, 2002-2014'.

Take a look at the previous editions, too!

- » Europass Magazine No 6, December 2013
(Main story: Erasmus+. EU programme for education, training, youth and sports)
- » Europass Magazine Nr. 5, July 2013
(Main story: Youth unemployment in Europe: How Europass can help)
- » Europass Newsletter Nr. 4, April 2013
(Main story: External evaluation of Europass + Work Groups and Regional Clusters)
- » Europass Newsletter Nr. 3, December 2012
(Main story: Europass 2012 – 2014: What is going to change?)
- » Europass Newsletter Nr. 2, September 2012
(Main story: European tools and principles for skills and qualifications)
- » Europass Newsletter Nr. 1, May 2012
(Main story: Europass at the interface of education and labour market)

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