THE EUROPEAN UNION POLICY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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FOREWORD

*T*he EU VET policy determines whole areas of the life of the European citizen. It shapes the future perspectives, opportunities, ways and means that people take into account when considering and making decisions on career choice, training, access to employment, professional development, labour market transition, and mobility (whether educational or professional, intranational or transnational). The EU VET policy affects more than 300 million EU citizens aged 15–64.

However, it is not so well known, perhaps because it was developed in forums that are not very popular with the general public and the media, and according to procedures which, although open and transparent, hardly involve a few hundreds of players across the Union. In the national space, it is also difficult to distinguish European policy from VET measures of purely national inspiration, with which it is articulated in a balance that is sometimes not so obvious. Moreover, as a whole teeming with initiatives and projects, partly intertwined with education policy and sometimes bordering on social policy, youth policy and regional policy, the EU VET policy constitutes a complex set the structuring and contours of which are not always easily discernible.

This book presents the European Union's policy in the field of vocational training. The aim is to contribute to a better understanding of how it is developed, its objectives, areas of intervention, and main achievements. The book is intended for enabling everyone to get an overall idea of this

strand of the EU policy action, identify its basics, understand its developments, and analyse its strengths, weaknesses, and prospects. And for providing food for thought.

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BOXES, TABLES, GRAPH

MAIN ACRONYMS

ACVT	Advisory Committee for Vocational Training
Cedefop	The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CoVE	Centre of Vocational Excellence
CVET	Continuing VET
DGEAC	Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
DG EMPL	Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
DGVT	Directors-General for Vocational Training
ECVET	European Credit System for VET
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance in VET
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union

IVET   Initial VET

NQF   National Qualifications Framework

OECD   Organisation for Economic Cooperation
              and Development

OMC   Open Method of Coordination

VET   Vocational Education and Training

INTRODUCTION

*V*ocational education and training (VET) has the distinctive objective of providing learners with knowledge, competences, and qualifications, enabling them to be operational in the exercise of a profession. It takes place before entering working life (initial VET – IVET) or during working life (continuing VET – CVET). IVET is mainly provided at secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary, and tertiary education levels, and at induction training level for example for law, health or teaching professionals. Continuing VET is provided to people of working age in employment (employees and self-employed), unemployed, or in transition from one job to another or from inactivity to employment. Whether initial or continuing, VET can take place not only within the framework of formal education structures, but also in the context of non-formal education.

Each country has its own VET policy. In the Member States of the European Union (EU), these national policies coexist with guidelines defined for the whole of the Union at community level. These community-level guidelines are what this book focuses on.

European VET policy has evolved since its origins, both in its themes and in its methods. Nowadays, it affects both the content and modalities of VET, although more the latter than the former. The first chapter presents the main features of its development since the 1960s. Chapter 2 shows how European policy influences the content of VET. Intervention on the modalities relates more specifically to the principle of

inclusive access (Chapter 3); the conditions for acquiring competences – work-based learning (Chapter 4) and transnational mobility (Chapter 5); and the conditions for validating and recognising competences (Chapter 6). European policy also attaches major importance to the conditions that determine the quality of VET (Chapter 7).

In the views of its designers, by simultaneously coordinating action on these different strands, the EU VET policy is likely to allow for the generalisation, in the Member States, of VET systems of excellence, providing high-quality education and training, attractive to their potential users, inclusive, equitable, and responsive to social demand, and at the same time efficient and adapted to the needs of labour markets and economies, promoting lifelong learning, and capable of serving as reference models on the international scene.

CHAPTER 1. THE EU POLICY FOR VET: ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

*T*he European VET policy was born in 1957, within the framework of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) [1], signed in Rome on 25 March 1957. Article 128 of the EEC Treaty provided for the possibility of a common VET policy:

> *On a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, the Council establishes the general principles for the implementation of a common VET policy which can contribute to the harmonious development of both national economies and the common market.*

Based on Article 128, the general principles of the European VET policy were set out in the Council Decision of 2 April 1963[2]. Considering the need for updating the labour force qualifications to cope with technological developments and structural changes in economies, increasing employment, and ensuring workers' free movement, the Decision spells out ten principles. Principle 2 sets "fundamental objectives" in terms of organising VET to serve the needs of economic activity, but also taking into account the interests of individuals: "*guarantee adequate*

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[1] CELEX:11957E/TXT

[2] Council Decision 63/266/EEC of 2 April 1963 (CELEX:31963D0266)

vocational training for all"[3]; "*harmonious development of the personality*"; "*promote basic and advanced vocational training and, where appropriate, retraining, suitable for the various stages of working life*"[4], and "*offer to every person (...) the opportunity to gain promotion or to receive instruction for a new and higher level of activity*".

The general principles also provide for developing permanent systems for information and guidance or vocational advice accessible to workers throughout their working life (Third principle); the promotion of training for teachers and trainers (Seventh principle); and the setting up of conditions allowing for the mutual recognition of vocational training certifications (Eighth principle).

Against this background, the First *Joint Programme to encourage the exchange of young workers*[5] was put in place in 1964. The programme targeted young people aged 18 to 30 who already had basic VET background. It provided them with grants for moving to another Member State to improve their professional training and their cultural and linguistic knowledge.

At the same period was started the alignment of the national rules regarding the requirements for the entry of nationals from other Member States into regulated professions. Article 57 of the EEC Treaty provided for the possibility of adopting "*Directives aimed at the mutual*

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[3] 36 years before Article 14 of the 2000 EU Charter of fundamental rights (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)

[4] The principle of access to continuing VET was later on further elaborated by Council Recommendation 93/404/EEC of 30 June 1993 (CELEX:31993H0404)

[5] Decision 64/307/EEC of 8 May 1964 (CELEX:41964X0307)

recognition of diplomas, certificates and other titles" with a view to "*facilitating access to self-employed activities and the exercise thereof*". Based on this, a process was initiated to establish the Community rules applicable to the requirements in terms of experience, qualifications, and certifications[6] for the settlement of nationals from other Member States in the professions of craftsmanship, commerce, industry, health, law, and in the liberal professions.

The EEC's interest in VET significantly increased as of the 1980s. In most Member States, the economic crisis resulting from the oil shocks led to a sharp rise and then a persistence in overall unemployment, long-term unemployment, and youth unemployment. VET therefore aroused major interest. In line with neo-Keynesian approaches to unemployment, and in particular analyses in terms of *insider-outsider* (Lindbeck & Snower, 1988), VET was perceived, on the one hand, as a possible factor for improving the productivity and employability of the unemployed; and on the other hand, as capable of directing to the labour market an additional supply of qualified labour, likely to exert a pressure conducive to wage moderation and competitiveness.

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[6] See Glossary for the use of the words *qualification* and *certification* in this book.

The turning point of Maastricht

Consequently, in 1992, within the framework of the Treaty of Maastricht[7], which established the European Union in place of the EEC, article 128 of the EEC Treaty was replaced by an article 127[8] which more explicitly and more precisely defined the EU VET policy:

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[7] Treaty on European Union, signed at Maastricht on February 1992 – Initial version (OJ:C:1992:191:FULL)

[8] Article 127 in the original version of the Maastricht Treaty. The original version was subsequently amended several times, then profoundly reworked in 2007 by the Treaty of Lisbon (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). Following the Lisbon Treaty, entered into force in 2009, article 127 was removed from the Maastricht Treaty (it therefore no longer appears in the consolidated version of the Maastricht Treaty) and became Article 166 of the Lisbon Treaty. In article 166, where the word Community is replaced by Union, point 4 is adapted as follows:

4. The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt measures to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States, and the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations. Lisbon Treaty, consolidated version (CELEX:12012E/TXT)

Article 127

1. *The Community shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organization of vocational training.*

2. *Community action shall aim to:*

   - *facilitate adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retraining;*

   - *improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market;*

   - *facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people;*

   - *stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms;*

   - *develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States.*

3. *The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the sphere of vocational training.*

4. *The Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189c and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt measures to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any*

harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

Article 127 confirms the Union's interest in VET and in the themes already addressed since 1963: support for industrial change, initial and continuing training, and integration-reintegration, in the 1963 Decision on the general principles; mobility of trainers, learners, and young people, and education-enterprise cooperation, in the *Joint Programmes for the exchange of young workers*[9], and the *Comett*[10], *Lingua*[11], *Eurotecnet*[12], *Force*[13], and *Petra*[14] programmes.

However, it is rather on the distribution of responsibilities between Community institutions and Member States that Article 127 of the Maastricht Treaty innovates. This distribution had not been established in the EEC Treaty.

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[9] After that of 1964, two successive *Joint Programmes* had been adopted, respectively in 1979 and 1984:
- Council Decision 79/642/EEC of 16 July 1979 (CELEX:31979D0642)
- Council Decision 84/636/EEC of 13 December 1984 (CELEX:31984D0636)

[10] Council Decision 86/365/EEC of 24 July 1986 (CELEX:31986D0365)

[11] Council Decision 89/489/EEC of 28 July 1989 (CELEX:31989D0489)

[12] Council Decision 89/657/EEC of 18 December 1989 (CELEX:31989D0657)

[13] Council Decision 90/267/EEC of 29 May 1990 (CELEX:31990D0267)

[14] Council Decision 91/387/EEC of 22 July 1991 (CELEX:31991D0387)

From then on, Article 127 of the Maastricht Treaty clearly assigns to the Member States the main responsibility for the content and organisation of VET, and to the Union only a subsidiary supporting, supplementing, and facilitating role, as well as the task of fostering cooperation and "*the exchange of information and experience*". This role distribution was later confirmed by the Lisbon Treaty (see Box 1 below).

Box 1.

Distribution of responsibilities between the Union and the Member States as of the Lisbon Treaty

Following the Lisbon Treaty signed in 2007, (a) the principles of conferral, subsidiarity, and proportionality, were clearly set out in Article 5 of the new version of the Maastricht Treaty; and (b) Article 6 of the Lisbon Treaty classifies VET among the areas for which the Union has only competence "*to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States*":

Article 5 of the consolidated Maastricht Treaty

1. The limits of Union competences are governed by the principle of conferral. The use of Union competences is governed by the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. 2. Under the principle of conferral, the Union shall act only within the limits of the competences conferred upon it by the Member States in the Treaties to attain the objectives set out therein. Competences not conferred upon the Union in the Treaties remain with the Member States. 3. Under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level. The institutions of the Union shall apply the principle of subsidiarity as laid down in the Protocol on the application of

> *the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. National Parliaments ensure compliance with the principle of subsidiarity in accordance with the procedure set out in that Protocol. 4. Under the principle of proportionality, the content and form of Union action shall not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties. The institutions of the Union shall apply the principle of proportionality as laid down in the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.*
>
> **Article 6 of the consolidated Lisbon Treaty**
>
> *The Union shall have competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States. The areas of such action shall, at European level, be: (a) protection and improvement of human health; (b) industry; (c) culture; (d) tourism; (e) education, vocational training, youth and sport; (f) civil protection; (g) administrative cooperation.*

This clarification took place in a political context marked by questions about the governance of the European institutions. Leaving aside here the contestation emanating from the sovereignist streams, the subject of which is more the political prominence of European integration rather than its functioning, three main types of criticism were converging at that time. First, those from the Member States, anxious to preserve their prerogatives in the face of the perceived risks of encroachment on the part of the Union. Then, criticisms from national public opinions, which alleged a democratic deficit in the European institutions. Finally, the criticism of a discrepancy between European policies and regional and local realities was also put forward.

In its 2001 White Paper[15] on the European governance, the European Commission observed (page 5)

> *the widening gulf between the European Union and the people it serves:*
>
> *— there is a perceived inability of the Union to act effectively where a clear case exists, for instance, unemployment, food safety scares, crime, the conflicts on the EU's borders and its role in the world,*
>
> *— where the Union does act effectively, it rarely gets proper credit for its actions. People do not see that improvements in their rights and quality of life actually come from European rather than national decisions. But at the same time, they expect the Union to act as effectively and visibly as their national governments,*
>
> *— by the same token, Member States do not communicate well about what the Union is doing and what they are doing in the Union. 'Brussels' is too easily blamed by Member States for difficult decisions that they themselves have agreed or even requested,*
>
> *— finally, many people do not know the difference between the institutions. They do not understand who takes the decisions that affect them and do not feel the institutions act as an effective channel for their views and concerns.*

The EU governance therefore underwent a methodical readjustment during the second half of the 1990s. A new approach was explored, first within the framework of the employment policy. Community "*Guidelines*" were agreed

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[15] European Governance — A White Paper COM(2001) 428 final (2001/C 287/01) – (COM:2001:0428:FIN:EN:PDF)

upon by the Member States, and their implementation was carried out by each Member State according to its specific *National Action Plan*, without constraint, on a voluntary basis, but in an overall context shaped to encourage emulation between States, in particular by defining policy target and indicators, publicising national performance, and promoting best practices. Thus emerged the *Open Method of Coordination* (OMC), the principles of which were finally formalised in the Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23–24 March 2000[16], paragraphs 37 and 38:

37. Implementation of the strategic goal will be facilitated by applying a new open method of coordination as the means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals. This method, which is designed to help Member States to progressively develop their own policies, involves:

- *fixing guidelines for the Union combined with specific timetables for achieving the goals which they set in the short, medium and long terms;*
- *establishing, where appropriate, quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks against the best in the world and tailored to the needs of different Member States and sectors as a means of comparing best practice;*
- *translating these European guidelines into national and regional policies by setting specific*

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[16] Lisbon European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000 – Presidency Conclusions
(https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm)

targets and adopting measures, taking into account national and regional differences;

- *periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review organised as mutual learning processes.*

38. A fully decentralised approach will be applied in line with the principle of subsidiarity in which the Union, the Member States, the regional and local levels, as well as the social partners and civil society, will be actively involved, using variable forms of partnership. A method of benchmarking best practices on managing change will be devised by the European Commission networking with different providers and users, namely the social partners, companies and NGOs.

This new approach aimed to respond to the three challenges of subsidiarity (the OMC was only intended for areas where the Union does not have exclusive competence and must therefore articulate its action with that of the Member States), democratic deficit, and better taking on board the local and regional realities. The OMC was applied as of 2002 to the field of VET, clearly recognised at that stage as being mainly the responsibility of the Member States.

The Copenhagen Process

The Council Resolution of 27 June 2002[17] mandates the Commission to

promote, in close cooperation with the Council and the Member States, increased cooperation in education and training based on the issues of transparency and quality

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[17] Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 (CELEX:32002G0709(01))

assurance, in order to develop a framework for recognition of qualifications, building on the achievements of the Bologna process and promoting similar action in the area of vocational training. Such cooperation should ensure the active involvement of the social partners, vocational and educational training institutions and the other relevant stakeholders.

Based on this, the ministers responsible for VET in the Member States, meeting in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, initiated the Copenhagen Process, for cooperation with a view to identifying and implementing common values, priorities, objectives, and approaches in VET[18]. By its Resolution of 19 December 2002[19], the Council endorsed the move and assigned its priorities: strengthening the European dimension, the quality of VET, and the recognition of qualifications. The Copenhagen Process then developed through a series of meetings held respectively in Maastricht (2004), Helsinki (2006), Bordeaux (2008), Bruges (2010), Riga (2015) and

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[18] Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, agreed in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training "The Copenhagen Declaration"
(https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/copenahagen_declaration_en.pdf)
It should be noted however that, despite the title of the Declaration, the Copenhagen Process is not an enhanced cooperation in the sense of Article 20 of the consolidated Maastricht Treaty.

[19] Council Resolution 2003/C 13/02 of 19 December 2002
(CELEX:32003G0118(01))

Osnabrück (2020), each punctuated by a final document updating the process for the period to follow.

In the Copenhagen Process, the inaugural meeting that launches a new period brings together not only the ministers responsible for VET in the Member States, but also

- representatives of the candidate countries[20], as part of the process of aligning the procedures and policies of these countries with those of the EU;
- representatives of the three other Member States of the European Economic Area – EEA (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), who may decide to take part in EU VET policy programmes (e.g., *Erasmus+*);
- the European confederations of trade unions and employers' organisations[21]; and
- the European Commission, responsible for the administration of the meetings.

The institutional preparation for these meetings, and in particular the drafting of preparatory documents and the framing of the orientations to be discussed, is ensured by the *Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion* ("DG Employment") of the Commission, and more specifically by its Unit for Vocational education and training. For this operation, DG Employment relies on various partners, among which the *European Centre for the*

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[20] Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey.

[21] The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC); the Business Europe employers' confederation; the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME); and SGI Europe (ex-CEEP), the confederation of public service and general interest companies.

Development of Vocational Training – Cedefop, and the *European Training Foundation* (ETF), responsible for monitoring VET policies, respectively in the Member States (Cedefop) and in the candidate countries (ETF). DG Employment also involves various VET stakeholders in its work, including not only the social partners but also representatives of VET institutions, and associations of VET pupils, students, and apprentices. Where necessary, DG Employment also mobilises experts from outside the institutions of the European Union.

The meeting participants prepare their positions and interventions taking on board – among others – the results of prior consultations with relevant stakeholders (for example companies, sectoral organisations, and chambers of commerce and industry; training institutions; unions of education, training, and guidance staff; associations of pupils, students, and apprentices; public employment services; local and regional public administrations). The participants also take into account the orientations of the general education policy of the European Union, as presented in particular in the *Strategic frameworks for education and training*[22], and the general orientations of the Union's policy, as expressed in other EU Strategies (e.g., for

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[22] - For the period 2010-2020: Council Conclusions 2009/C 119/02 of 12 May 2009 (celex%3A52009XG0528%2801%29)
- For the period 2021-2030: Council Resolution 2021/C 66/01 (CELEX:32021G0226(01))

competences[23], or digitisation, innovation, or the environment) and the *European Pillar of Social Rights*[24].

The monitoring of the implementation of the orientations decided within the framework of the Copenhagen Process is ensured by Cedefop and the ETF, which draw up annual and/or mid-term evaluation reports on the progress observed at the national level. These reports are presented at meetings of the national Directors-General for VET (DGVTs) and to the *Advisory Committee for Vocational Training* (ACVT), the expert group responsible for assisting DG Employment with VET policy. At the end of the period, Cedefop and the ETF draw up a joint stock-taking and evaluation report, highlighting good practices and needs for further action, and outlining prospects. The joint Cedefop-ETF report serves as a basis for the preparation of the next period[25].

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[23] - A New Skills Agenda for Europe, 2016 (CELEX:52016DC0381)
   - European Skills Agenda, 2020 (CELEX:52020DC0274)

[24] European Pillar of Social Rights
   (CELEX%3A32017C1213%2801%29)

[25] The Cedefop website provides access to the monitoring reports since 2004 (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/reporting-european-training-policy) and especially:
   - for the period 2010-2014, to the synthesis report on the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué for the whole Union (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3067); and
   - for the 2015-2019 period, to reports on the implementation of the Riga Conclusions
      ▪ for the whole Union (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3084_en.pdf)
      ▪ and for each Member State (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/vet-policy-developments)

Each country implements the common orientations depending on its own priorities and national realities. The policies put in place at the national level can thus both reflect only a part of the common guidelines and at the same time entail aspects not covered by the guidelines.

One policy, two channels

Since 2002, the EU VET policy has thus developed through two channels. On the one hand, orientations in the form of Declarations, Communiqués, and Conclusions, have been established by the open coordination between stakeholders within the framework of the Copenhagen Process. On the other hand, the "institutional triangle" of the Union (the Commission, the Council[26], and the Parliament) also contribute to the definition of orientations by means of non-binding texts (Recommendations, Communications, Resolutions, Opinions), and at the same time pursue an active role in the development, by means of Recommendations, Decisions, Directives, and

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[26] The Council, also called the Council of Ministers or the Council of the European Union (distinct from the European Council, which is the Council of Heads of State and Government), is made up of government representatives sitting by area of competence. There are ten configurations: General affairs (in charge in particular of institutional issues, enlargements, and the preparation of the European Council sessions); Foreign affairs; Transport, telecommunications and energy; Economic and financial affairs; Competitiveness; Environment; Employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs; Justice and home affairs; Education, youth, culture and sport; Agriculture and fisheries.

Regulations[27], of mechanisms (such as *Europass*[28], the EQF[29], ECVET[30], and EQAVET[31]) and transnational programmes of cooperation and mobility (such as the *Lifelong Learning Programme*[32] and *Erasmus+*[33]).

In the case of texts from the institutional triangle, the development process is carried out according to the "Community method": the Commission prepares proposals that it submits for adoption to the Council (and, where appropriate, to the Parliament)[34]. The Commission then monitors the implementation, and reports to the Council (and, as appropriate, to the Parliament) by the deadline set in the act. Since 2011, annual monitoring has also been carried

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[27] According to Article 288 of the Lisbon Treaty: "*A regulation shall have general application. It shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States. A directive shall be binding, as to the result to be achieved, upon each Member State to which it is addressed, but shall leave to the national authorities the choice of form and methods. A decision shall be binding in its entirety. A decision which specifies those to whom it is addressed shall be binding only on them. Recommendations and opinions shall have no binding force.*"

[28] Decision 2241/2004/EC (CELEX:32004D2241)

[29] European Qualifications Framework: Recommendation 2008/C111/01 (CELEX:32008H0506(01))

[30] European Credit System for VET: Recommendation 2009/C155/02 (CELEX:32009H0708(02))

[31] European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET: Recommendation 2009/C155/01 (CELEX:32009H0708(01))

[32] Decision 1720/2006/EC (CELEX:32006D1720)

[33] Regulation 1288/2013 (CELEX:32013R1288)

[34] The Commission also has the power to, in complete autonomy, issue its own Recommendations and Communications.

out as part of the *European Semester*. The process of the European Semester provides that each year in April, each Member State sends to the Commission its *National Reform Programme* (NRP), detailing the measures envisaged in application of the economic and social policy guidelines adopted by the institutions of the Union. Based on these NRPs, the Commission prepares *Country-specific recommendations (CSRs)* for each Member State, which it submits to the Council for approval. The CSRs are formally adopted by the Council in July.

In some cases, more specific monitoring and evaluation approaches may also be set up. This is the case, for example, for the 2011 '*Youth on the Move*' Recommendation[35], which provides for a monitoring system in the form of mobility scoreboards set up respectively by DGEAC (for transnational mobility in higher education[36]) and by Cedefop (for transnational mobility in initial VET[37]).

The two channels for drawing up European VET policies are in a complementary relationship. They contribute to convergent objectives and mutually reinforce each other through reciprocal references. In 2020, the Osnabrück Declaration (European Commission, 2021) held that "*The Copenhagen Process provides a tripartite platform to intensify, complement and operationalise the European VET*

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[35] Council Recommendation 2011/C199/01 of 28 June 2011 – Youth on the move (CELEX:32011H0707(01))

[36] Mobility scoreboard for higher education (https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/mobility-scoreboard/higher-education/scoreboard-indicators)

[37] Mobility scoreboard for initial vocational education and training (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/mobility-scoreboard)

policy, as adopted by the Council of the European Union".
In 2021, the Council Resolution defining the strategic
framework for the *European Education Area*[38] stated that
"*The Copenhagen process is an important aspect of
European cooperation under the open method of
coordination in the field of VET, which will contribute to
achieving the strategic priorities set out in this framework*".

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[38] Council Resolution 2021/C 66/01 of 18 February 2021
(CELEX:32021G0226(01))

CHAPTER 2. INTERVENTION ON TRAINING CONTENT: KEY COMPETENCES AND TRANSITION TO THE GREEN ECONOMY

*T*he Lisbon Treaty[39] gives Member States primary responsibility for teaching content, both in the education system (Article 165[40]) and in the VET system (Article 166), and restricts the role of EU institutions in this area to encouraging cooperation between Member States and supporting and supplementing the action of States. Union intervention on training content is therefore necessarily limited. It does exist, however, as EU institutions made a point of recommending, since the early 2000s, the integration of key competences into general education and VET programmes. On top of this, initiatives in 2020 point to also training for green competences.

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[39] Lisbon Treaty, consolidated version (CELEX:12012E/TXT)

[40] The first paragraph of Article 165 states: "*The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity*".

2.1. Key competences

Key competences are defined as "*a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes (...) which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship*"[41]. They are elementary competences, not complex competences in the sense of competence-oriented education[42].

The introduction, in teaching content, of key competences defined at the level of the European Union, was initiated in the early 2000s, within the framework of the European Councils of Lisbon (2000), Stockholm (2001) and Barcelona (2002). It was confirmed by the adoption in 2006 of a Recommendation on key competences[43] (which was later on updated in 2018[44]). These two Recommendations set

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[41] Council Recommendation 2018/C 189/01 of 22 May 2018 (OJ:C:2018:189:FULL)

[42] Competence-oriented education distinguishes between elementary competence and complex competence, which is the ability to master problem situations (especially ones never ever met before) through mobilising a set of knowledge, skills (elementary competences), attitudes, schemata, values, and norms. Competence-oriented education is targeted at learner acquisition of complex competences, not only knowledge and elementary competences. See for example Boukhentache 2016, Haddouchane et al. 2017, Dancot 2016, Soare 2015 and 2019, Muñoz & Araya 2017, Pellaud et al. 2021, Tchibozo 2011.

[43] Recommendation 2006/962/EC of 18 December 2006 (CELEX:32006H0962)

[44] Council Recommendation 2018/C 189/01 of 22 May 2018 (OJ:C:2018:189:FULL)

out a Reference Framework that defines eight areas of key competences, listed as follows in the 2018 version:

- Literacy competence
- Multilingual competence
- Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering
- Digital competence
- Personal, social and learning to learn competence
- Citizenship competence
- Entrepreneurship competence
- Cultural awareness and expression competence.

The Recommendations were afterwards complemented by the publication of three additional Reference Frameworks[45], intended to facilitate a common understanding of digital competences[46] (2013), entrepreneurial competences[47] (2016), and environmental

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[45] These reference frameworks set in the European Union are distinct from those established by the Council of Europe in 2001 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – CEFR) and in 2016 (Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture). That said, the definition of language and citizenship competences in the 2018 EU Recommendation on key competences actually draws on the frameworks of the Council of Europe.

[46] The Digital Competence Framework (https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework)

[47] The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC109 128/jrc109128_entrecomp_into_action_-_final_1.pdf)

sustainability competences[48] (2022). The Commission next submitted to the Council, in January 2022, a proposal for a Recommendation on education for environmental sustainability[49].

EU VET policy makers view the integration of key competences into teaching content as crucial to enable individuals to cope with rapid changes in societies. Therefore, not only general education but also VET, which is specifically concerned with changes in labour market demand and production technologies, must prepare learners for addressing these changes. Therefore, the Bordeaux Communiqué[50] (2008) first, then in 2010 the Bruges Communiqué (European Commission, 2012), clearly called for integrating key competences into IVET and CVET programmes.

The 2015 Cedefop-ETF synthesis report on the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué (Cedefop, 2015, p. 31) shows that by 2010, half of the Member States had already integrated the key competences into their VET curricula. Between 2010 and 2014, 12 additional Member States did the same. Strengthening actions have been implemented since 2015 (Cedefop, 2020a, pp. 64–70).

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[48] GreenComp – The European sustainability competence framework (https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/greencomp-european-sustainability-competence-framework_en)

[49] Proposal of 14 January 2022 for a Council Recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2022:11:FIN)

[50] Bordeaux Communiqué – 2008 (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3972-att1-1-The_Bordeaux_Communique.pdf)

However, each Member State has retained the freedom to adapt the EU list of competences according to its own vision. In Flemish Belgium, for example, a Government Decree of 26 January 2018[51] set out 16 key competences for compulsory general and vocational secondary education, including, for instance, "competences related to spatial awareness" and "legal competences", which are not on the EU list.

An example of key competences strengthening in the field of multilingualism is the *Languages Connect* strategy, adopted in Ireland in 2017 for the period 2017–2026 (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). Several foreign languages can in principle be taught in general secondary and vocational secondary education in Ireland: German, Spanish, French, and Italian at lower secondary education (*junior cycle*), which are supplemented by Arabic, Japanese and Russian at high school (*senior cycle*). But, in reality, due to the lack of qualified teachers and budgetary constraints, most schools offer only one or at best two of these foreign languages. The *Languages Connect* strategy therefore aims to increase the number of schools offering at least two foreign languages, and to increase by 25% the number of pupils taking part in the tests of at least two foreign languages at the secondary school leaving examination (*Leaving Certificate*) by 2026. The strategy also provides for doubling the number of foreign language assistants, and introducing new languages, i.e., Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Lithuanian, and Portuguese.

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[51] In French: Décret du 26 janvier 2018 (https://etaamb.openjustice.be/fr/decret-du-26-janvier-2018_n2018030576)

In the area of entrepreneurial competences, Slovakia introduced a *National Standard for* Financial Literacy[52] in primary and secondary education in 2008, which has since been revised in 2014 and 2017. In its 2017 version, the standard provides that any holder of the secondary school leaving certificate should be able to:

- *search, evaluate and use financial information;*
- *know the basic rules of financial management;*
- *identify financial management risks;*
- *set financial goals and establish a plan to achieve them;*
- *develop own's potential to earn one's own income and ability to save;*
- *use financial services effectively;*
- *meet own's financial obligations;*
- *protect and grow one's own property and those one is entrusted with;*
- *understand and meet basic human and economic needs;*
- *evaluate one's own achievements, and learn from examples of successful people;*
- *understand basic financial concepts;*
- *orient oneself in the space of financial institutions (National Bank of Slovakia , commercial banks;*

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[52] - Version 1.2 (2017), in Slovak language: Národný štandard finančnej gramotnosti verzia 1.2 (https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/11359.pdf)
 - Version 1.1 (2014), in English: National standard of financial literacy version 1.1 (https://www.minedu.sk/data/att/11069.pdf)

> *insurance companies, financial intermediaries and other financial institutions);*

- *understand and be able to deal with consumer rights protection issues;*
- *master the rights, obligations, advantages and risks related to entrepreneurship;*
- *establish and present one's own business plan, think strategically, analyse and solve problems.*

Regarding entrepreneurial competences, another example is that of Poland where, as part of the *Lifelong Learning Perspective strategy*[53] adopted in 2013, training in entrepreneurial competences is an integral part of compulsory education in primary and secondary education. It is implemented within the framework of "History and Society" and "Mathematics" courses in primary and secondary school; and within the framework of "Civic Education", "Geography", "Information Technologies", and "Introduction to Entrepreneurship" courses in secondary education. It is also the subject of the optional course "Practice of Economics" in high school.

2.2. Green competences

A matter of growing concern, the green transition has been mentioned in the EU VET policy since the 2010 Bruges Communiqué (European Commission, 2012), which touches on the need for training in new competences, for example in "reducing waste" and "improving energy efficiency".

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[53] The *Lifelong learning perspective* strategy (in Polish): *Strategia uczenia się przez całe życie*
(https://www.gov.pl/attachment/8f556d4d-09fb-4882-b0ca-b50f6f64606b)

However, not earlier than the Osnabrück Declaration in 2020 (European Commission, 2021) were concrete courses of action agreed between participants in the Copenhagen Process. The authors of the Osnabrück Declaration note that sustainability is a transversal concern, and invite stakeholders to create incentives for education and training in green technologies, energy efficiency, and circular economy, and to "*define labour-market-relevant skills for the green transition that are to be incorporated in curricula and VET provision*". The prescription thus goes one step beyond simply drawing attention to the "*basic principles of the natural world*", the "*impact of (...) human activity in general on the natural world*", the "*support for (...) environmental sustainability*", the "*awareness of (...) sustainable systems, in particular climate and demographic change at the global level and their underlying causes*" and "*readiness to (...) take responsibility for the environment*", as was the case in the 2018 Recommendation on key competences. To this end, the Osnabrück Declaration encourages VET communities to cooperate, share information, and exchange good practices on methods for educating green competences and developing the provision of training thereof.

However, in this area, the EU policy arrives only after initiatives already taken at the national level by the Member States. Several Cedefop reports show that different Member States were already active – sometimes for a long time – in integrating green competences into VET curricula. Cedefop notes that in Germany, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB)[54] recommended as early as 1988 that green

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[54] The *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* (BIBB), an institute for VET research and forward-looking analysis, is in Germany the

competences be taken into account in VET (Cedefop, 2018a, p. 15). In Denmark, economic and professional sectors update the VET programmes under their jurisdiction every year. Cedefop indicates that in this country, over the last period, the training programmes for the construction professions (mason, roofer, thermal insulation) were updated by introducing modules relating to energy saving; programmes for the refrigeration professions were amended to take account of new technologies that are more environment-friendly and less energy-intensive; the training programme for the profession of wind turbine operator was created in 2010; and the plumber's training programme was overhauled in 2015 (Cedefop, 2018b, pp. 15−16). In Spain , Cedefop notes that all the 166 VET programmes that were in place in 2017 included a minimum base of "*general transversal green content*", and that 21 of these programmes had been set after 2007 to train specifically for jobs in the environmental protection sector (Cedefop, 2018c, pp. 20−22). In France, beyond simple awareness raising through the "Prevention – Health – Environment" modules in secondary vocational education[55], the 2016 Beaupère report (Beaupère et al., 2016, pp. 4−7) shows that many VET programmes –

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organisation responsible for advising the government and the parliament on VET policy.

[55] "Prevention – Health – Environment" modules, in French: Prévention – Santé – Environnement (https://eduscol.education.fr/1769/programmes-et-ressources-en-prevention-sante-environnement-voie-professionnelle)

in addition to those[56] directly training for green professions[57] – take into account the green transition in their training standards[58] and/or in their recommended professional practices and "green gestures"[59].

In Estonia, the Parliament's Resolution *General principles of climate policy for 2050*[60]*,* adopted in 2017, plans to provide more comprehensive training, at all levels of the education system, in knowledge, competences and attitudes regarding climate change; and the *National Energy and Climate Plan for 2030*[61], published in 2019, plans to integrate into the education and training system, new

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[56] Metallurgy trades; building and public works trades; chemistry, bio-industry and environment trades; woodworking trades.

[57] The General Commission for Sustainable Development defines green professions as those "*the purpose and competences of which contribute to measuring, preventing, staying in control of, and correcting negative impacts and damage to the environment*", and "greening" professions as those "*the purpose of which is not environmental but which involve competences to take into account in a significant and quantifiable way the environmental dimension in the professional practice*" (Commissariat Général au Développement Durable, 2014).

[58] Food professions, fashion professions, tourism professions.

[59] Graphic and audiovisual communication professions; marketing and distribution professions; administrative and financial services professions; hairdressing and beauty trades; health and social sector trades.

[60] Resolution of the Riigikogu – General principles of climate policy until 2050 , p.1 (https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/lts/lts_ee_et.pdf)

[61] Estonia's 2030 National Energy and Climate Plan (https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/ee_final_n ecp_main_en.pdf)

standards for the training of refrigeration professionals with a view to combating greenhouse gases (p. 69). Clearly, not all Member States are equally advanced in integrating green competences into vocational curricula. In this sense, the intervention of EU policy in this area may have a stimulating effect. These prescriptions of the Osnabrück Declaration are in line with the fourth point of Action 6 of the *European Skills Agenda*[62], set in 2020 by the Commission, which plans to promote

> *the acquisition of skills for the green transition by (…) supporting the development of a core green skills set for the labour market to guide training across the economy with a view to creating a generation of climate, environment and health conscious professionals and green economic operators.*

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[62] European Skills Agenda, 2020 (CELEX:52020DC0274)

CHAPTER 3. INCLUSIVENESS, FLEXIBILITY, PERMEABILITY, AND GUIDANCE

*W*hilst the social dimension of the EU VET policy had previously only been expressed in a relatively discreet way[63], the Copenhagen Process gives it a much wider echo. While reaffirming the role of VET in supporting mobility, employability and competitiveness, the 2002 Copenhagen Declaration[64] also highlighted VET's importance for social inclusion and social cohesion. The Bordeaux Communiqué[65] (2008) recalled the need for non-discriminatory access to VET. The 2010 Bruges Communiqué (European Commission, 2012) assigned to VET a dual objective of, on the one hand,

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[63] Rare were the texts which, like Article 3 of the 1994 Decision establishing the *Leonardo* programme, would call for taking into account "*disadvantaged young people without adequate training, and in particular young people who leave the school system without adequate training*"; or "*persons disadvantaged, for example by socio-economic, geographical or ethnic factors or by physical or mental handicaps*"; or "*people with several risk factors likely to lead to their socio-economic exclusion*"; or migrant workers: Council Decision 94/819/EC of 6 December 1994 (CELEX:31994D0819)

[64] The Copenhagen Declaration – 2002 (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/copenahagen_declaration_en.pdf)

[65] The Bordeaux Communiqué – 2008 (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3972-att1-1-The_Bordeaux_Communique.pdf)

"*contributing to employability and economic growth*", and on the other hand "*responding to broader societal challenges, in particular promoting social cohesion*". The Communiqué also emphasised the personal benefit that individuals should be able to derive from VET, in particular good career prospects, job satisfaction, self-confidence, and pride in one's job. In 2015, the Riga Conclusions (European Commission, 2016a) noted the importance of VET for personal development and quality of life.

Inclusiveness is sought through VET measures aimed at meeting the needs of the widest possible range of social situations and/or social groups. Inclusiveness requires training systems to be flexible and permeable, and vocational guidance further developed.

3.1. Inclusiveness, equity and cohesion

The successive rounds of the Copenhagen Process have systematically reaffirmed the need for European VET policy to be inclusive. VET is inclusive if it is accessible to anyone who needs it to take one's place in employment and in society, and to feel involved, legitimate, recognised and accepted, on an equal footing with others. Inclusiveness aims to ensure social equity and social cohesion. Moreover, inclusiveness is also necessary for enabling Member States' economies to adapt to the twin trends of technological change (which requires raising the level of qualification of as many of the workforce as possible) and of ageing (which requires adjusting accordingly the approaches to learning, qualification, and certification).

Various texts adopted before and then during the Copenhagen Process, as well as the Recommendation of 24

November 2020[66], have identified various social groups and/or singular social situations to which close attention should be paid in order to give people within them equal opportunities to access and succeed in VET. Particular attention has been paid to gender equality. In 1976, the Directive on the principle of equal treatment for men and women[67] prohibited gender discrimination, including in VET (Article 4). In 1987, the Recommendation on vocational training for women[68] called for the implementation of national policies encouraging the participation of women in training for professions where they are under-represented. The Member States were in particular invited to ensure that training services have staff made aware of specific gender issues, and to ensure that social infrastructure (particularly childcare) is put in place to allow women to be available for training (Article 2). The 1989 Decision establishing the *Eurotecnet*[69] programme also called for "*promoting equal opportunities for men and women, in particular the access of women to types of training with significant technological content*", and the 1990 Decision establishing the *Force*[70] programme urged Member States to "*promote effective equality of opportunity*

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[66] Council Recommendation 2020/C417/01 of 24 November 2020 (CELEX:32020H1202(01))

[67] Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 (CELEX:31976L0207)

[68] Commission Recommendation 87/567/EEC of 24 November 1987 (CELEX:31987H0567)

[69] Council Decision 89/657/EEC of 18 December 1989 (CELEX:31989D0657)

[70] Council Decision 90/267/EEC of 29 May 1990 (CELEX:31990D0267)

for men and women as regards access to continuing vocational training". In 2006, the Helsinki Communiqué[71] emphasised the under-representation of women in the field of technology. The Recommendation of 24 November 2020 advocates for promoting "*gender balance in traditionally 'male' or 'female' professions and address gender related and other types of stereotypes together*".

The following categories were also identified as needing to benefit from training actions and/or specific measures:

- people exposed to a risk of exclusion from the labour market (people who left the education and training system prematurely; young people neither in employment nor in training – NEETs; people with a low level of qualification; migrants, who may lack the necessary competences – e.g., professional or linguistic – to face the labour market requirements of the host country; unemployed people);
- vulnerable groups (people with special needs or with disabilities; minorities; people with an immigrant background);
- disadvantaged categories (which is to be assessed through the lens of the national or local context, for example nomadic populations);
- older workers;
- inactive people of working age; and
- people living in remote areas.

The actions recommended to develop and strengthen inclusiveness include both targeted measures and the

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[71] The Helsinki Communiqué
(https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/helsinkicom_en.pdf)

widening of access to existing training offers for specific groups and situations. The various EU VET policy documents indicate that the offers should be adapted to the specific needs of their intended beneficiaries. Offers should be "*accessible through digital learning platforms, supported by tools, devices and internet connection*"*,* especially when the intended recipients are in remote areas. Offers should make use of the potential of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality. Where necessary, they should be complemented by financial support measures. In the particular case of adults with a low level of qualification, the 2016 Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways[72] urges for structuring training programmes into three main components, which are competence assessment upon programme entry; designing training actions based on the assessment outcome; and competence validation on programme exiting.

At community level, the Union has taken innovative initiatives on inclusiveness. In 2013, *the Youth Guarantee*[73] was created. The initiative aims to ensure that any young person under the age of 25 who is neither in employment nor in the course of studies or training, can receive, within four months of entering this situation, either a job offer, or a proposal for further studies, apprenticeship, or for an internship. Under the terms of the 2013 Recommendation, the young people concerned must be provided with the information, guidance, and personalised assistance services that they may need for the implementation of this right.

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[72] Council Recommendation 2016/C484/01 of 19 December 2016 (CELEX:32016H1224(01))

[73] Council Recommendation 2013/C120/01 of 22 April 2013 (CELEX:32013H0426(01))

Those who lack sufficient professional qualifications must be provided with access to qualification pathways or second-chance programmes, and benefit from learning environments suited to their specific needs. The European Commission's 2016 report on the implementation of the *Youth Guarantee* (European Commission, 2016b) shows that by 2014, all Member States had drawn up a plan to set up the mechanism, and that some had even already started to implement it. In most Member States, however, the actual implementation only started in 2015. Thirteen Member States[74] have extended the maximum age of beneficiaries from 25 to 29 years. Several Member States have required that the offers made to the beneficiaries meet minimum quality criteria (these criteria however varying according to the country), for example through insisting on the need for the offer to be personalised[75], sustained over time[76], or labour market relevant[77]. In 2020, the maximum age for benefitting from the *Youth Guarantee* was extended for the whole of the Union to 29[78], and the mechanism was reinforced by the introduction of principles in terms of –

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[74] Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain.

[75] For example, according to individual profile and family situation, as is the case in Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, and Slovakia.

[76] For example, the training offered was not considered to be of good quality if it lasted less than 62 days in Austria or less than 300 hours in Portugal. In Malta, the jobs offered were not considered to be of good quality if their duration was less than six months.

[77] For example, in Bulgaria, Czechia, and Ireland.

[78] Council Recommendation 2020/C372/01 of 30 October 2020 (CELEX:32020H1104(01))

among others – mapping the target group, available services and skills needs; developing early warning systems for preventing entry into a situation of need; prior preparation before entry into the mechanism; individualisation of remediation; and insistence on digital competences. The European Commission's website provides monitoring data on the implementation of the *Youth Guarantee* country by country[79], and examples of good practices[80].

Another initiative at Community level relates to individual learning accounts. Inspired by the French experience on this matter, the Commission submitted to the Council in December 2021 a proposal for a Recommendation[81] to establish a European framework for developing digital individual learning accounts. The accounts would be financed by public, private, and EU funds[82], and would allow people of working age to accumulate credits in order to access eligible training offers. The credits would be transferable (i.e., attached to the individual throughout their working life), and would entail support in terms of guidance and validation.

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[79] Commission website – The Youth Guarantee, country by country (https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1161&langId=en)

[80] Commission website – Youth Guarantee – Knowledge Center (https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1327&langId=en)

[81] Proposal for a Council Recommendation on individual learning accounts (CELEX:52021DC0773)

[82] The Recommendation encourages Member States to "*make the maximum and most efficient use of EU funds and instruments, in particular the European Social Fund Plus, the European Regional Development Fund and the Just Transition Fund, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Technical Support Instrument*".

At Member State level, the Cedefop-ETF synthesis report on the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué suggests that in 2010, half of the Member States had no measures to promote the inclusiveness of VET (Cedefop, 2015, p. 81). The 2020 report on the implementation of the Riga Conclusions (Cedefop, 2020a, pp. 58–60) shows that all Member States have since then increased the provision of VET for at least one singular category. In several countries (especially Bulgaria, Estonia[83], Luxembourg, Spain, and Sweden[84]), these actions were supported (at least for some of them) by financial measures. Various examples illustrate the diversity of approaches. Some programmes clearly take gender equity concerns into account. There seems to be few programmes – at least for the time being – that strictly follow the three-strand model of the Upskilling Pathways Recommendation.

In Bulgaria, the 2015 Law[85] on employment provided in its paragraph 28 for financial support for employers offering work-based training positions to unemployed persons referred by the Employment Agency. In 2019, generalising actions undertaken from 2015, the *National Action Plan for Employment* provided for the implementation of training offers financed by vouchers, intended for a range of

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[83] See for example the Cedefop report (2020b, p. 29) on the implementation in Estonia of the Riga Conclusions.

[84] See for example the Cedefop report (2020c, p. 23) on the implementation of the Riga Conclusions in Sweden.

[85] Law of 11 December 2015 amending and supplementing the Law on the promotion of employment (in Bulgarian): Закон за изменение и допълнение на Закона за насърчаване на заетостта (https://dv.parliament.bg/DVWeb/showMaterialDV.jsp?idMat=99 505)

categories of unemployed: long-term unemployed; young unemployed aged under 29; unemployed lacking the qualifications required on the labour market; unemployed aged over 50; unemployed with a permanent disability; and discouraged unemployed. The aim was to encourage the unemployed to either acquire basic competences with a view to then access vocational training, or directly acquire professional competences in high demand on the labour market[86].

In Denmark, the *Building Bridges to Education* (*Brobygning til Uddannelse*) programme[87] is part of the *Youth Guarantee*. The programme offers young people a transition path from assistance to VET. The beneficiaries are integrated into VET schools where they can, for 15 weeks, under the supervision of a mentor, receive literacy and arithmetic courses, if necessary, but above all choose to follow vocational teaching and participate in short-term workplace internships. Other national *Youth Guarantee* schemes in some other countries (Germany, Greece, Luxembourg) have also enabled beneficiaries to access VET (European Commission, 2016b).

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[86] Bulgaria's *National Reform Programme*, as revised in 2019, provides an overview of these measures: Europe 2020 – National Reform Programme – 2019 Update (https://www.minfin.bg/upload/40840/National+Reform+Program me+2019+EN.pdf)

[87] https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20441&langId=en

In Spain, the *Action Plan for Youth Employment 2019–2021*[88] provided for various actions targeting

- young people who have left the education and training system prematurely, in order to enable them to acquire key competences in languages and mathematics so as to enable them to subsequently access VET (Action 13);
- unemployed young people aged between 16 and 30 who want to go back to school in order to complete secondary school or start a vocational course (Action 19, "second chance programmes" with financial support);
- staff whose role is to assist young unemployed migrants (Action 22);
- unemployed young people likely to integrate training programmes orientated towards renewable energies and energy efficiency, with a view to employment in the green transition sector (Action 23);
- vulnerable young people (for example young women victims of gender-based violence, young people with low levels of qualification, young people in long-term unemployment, young people at risk of social exclusion, young people with disabilities, young migrants and refugees, young

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[88] - Plan de Choque por el Empleo Joven (in Spanish) (https://www.sepe.es/HomeSepe/Personas/encontrar-trabajo/plan-de-choque-empleo-joven-2019-2021)
   - Action Plan for Youth Employment 2019-2021 (https://sepe.es/SiteSepe/contenidos/que_es_el_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf_empleo/Plan-de-Choque-Empleo-Joven-2019-2021-ing.pdf)

people with family responsibilities), in order to provide them with support (possibly financial) enabling them to take part in training and employment programmes (Action 32);

- young people experiencing particular difficulties in entering the labour market, in order to assess and validate their competences and help them gain access to a first professional experience (Action 34);
- young people living in territories characterised by geographical, economic and social conditions that are particularly unfavourable to access to employment, in order to enable them to benefit from support through individualised paths combining – according to needs – guidance, training, and employment (Action 36);
- young women having difficulty accessing employment, in order to enable them to benefit from training and job creation measures (Action 37);
- young unemployed women who wish to create a start-up or innovative technology company, to provide them with training and support (Action 39);
- young women from rural areas, so that they can benefit from training, particularly in the field of digital technologies (Action 39).

In Luxembourg, a wide range of training programmes have been in place since 2015 for different categories:

- unemployed people, covered by the *Fit4 Entrepreneurship*[89], *Fit4 Green&BuildJobs*[90], and *Fit4Coding*[91] programmes;
- young unemployed people (under the age of 30), covered by the *Fit4 Digital Future*[92] programme, focused on training in computer security, the creation of visual identity, the creation of websites, and relational databases;
- unemployed people over the age of 45, eligible to the *employment reintegration contract*[93], which allows them to benefit from theoretical and practical training while receiving a monthly allowance;
- unemployed persons with disabilities, who can benefit from the *employment reintegration contract*

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[89] Coaching and training in business creation and management (In French: https://adem.public.lu/en/demandeurs-demploi/Creer-ou-reprendre-une-entreprise/FIT4-Entrepteneurship.html)

[90] Training for construction professions (In French: https://adem.public.lu/dam-assets/fr/publications/demandeurs-emploi/2018/Flyer-FIT4-Green_BuildJobs/Fit4Greenbuildjob2017.pdf)

[91] Training for the IT developer profession (In French: https://digital-luxembourg.public.lu/initiatives/fit4coding)

[92] In French: https://adem.public.lu/dam-assets/fr/publications/demandeurs-emploi/2017/Flyer-Fit4Digitalfuture/Fit4digitalfuture.pdf

[93] In French: Contrat de réinsertion emploi (https://adem.public.lu/fr/employeurs/demander-aides-financieres/embaucher_de_45-ans/contrat-reinsertion-emploi-employeur.html#:~:text=Dans%20le%20cadre%20d'un,part%20du%20salaire%20normalement%20d%C3%BB.&text=Cette%20quote%2Dpart%20est%20ramen%C3%A9e,emploi%20du%20sexe%20sous%2Drepr%C3%A9sent%C3%A9.)

too, but also from the COSP-HR programme[94], which includes training in languages, communication, office automation, ergonomics and safety at work, and aims to facilitate professional integration or reintegration;

▪ young people who left the education and training system prematurely who, like the unemployed, can benefit from the *Fit4Coding* programme;

▪ migrants and asylum seekers, to whom are addressed in particular

— the *Supported integration pathway*[95], which offers personalised support, courses (literacy, Luxembourgish, French or other languages), and work-based learning;

— the *Words4Work* programme, organised by the Agency for the Development of Employment and operated by the National Institute for Languages to provide general French courses and French courses oriented towards professions in demand (shop assistant, painter's assistant, carpenter's assistant, mason, dishwasher, multi-skilled restaurant worker, kitchen assistant, chambermaid, multi-skilled technician, cleaning agent);

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[94] In French: https://adem.public.lu/fr/demandeurs-demploi/salaries-capacite-travail-reduite/aides-mesures/COSP-HR.html

[95] In French: Parcours d'intégration accompagné (https://integratioun.lu/project/parcours-dintegration-accompagne-pia/)

— and the *Connections4work* programme[96], which provides language courses targeted at entering occupations with labour shortages.

In French-speaking Belgium, Bruxelles Formation, in charge of VET in the Brussels-Capital Region, has implemented the *Formtruck* initiative since 2016. A vehicle dedicated to information and advice on training opportunities, the Formtruck travels to different districts of Brussels, providing the public, and in particular job seekers, with documentation and VET counselling services.

In France, several initiatives aimed at broadening the access of disadvantaged categories to VET have been taken since 2015. These include, in particular:

- the *Réussite Apprentissage* pathway[97], launched in 2015 to increase the supply of apprenticeship places accessible to young people from disadvantaged areas;
- the *500,000 Additional training actions* plan[98] for job seekers, launched in 2016;

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[96] In French: https://www.asti.lu/connections4work/

[97] In French: Parcours Réussite Apprentissage (https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/archives/archives-presse/archives-communiques-de-presse/article/lancement-du-parcours-reussite-apprentissage)

[98] In French: Plan *500 000 formations supplémentaires* (https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/archives/archives-courantes/plan-500-000-formations-supplementaires/)

- the third generation of *the Future Investments Programme*[99], launched in 2017 as part of the *Major Investment Plan*, and dedicated to supporting – among others – the updating and strengthening of the competences of people in employment or in transition to employment;
- the *Plan for Investment in Competences*, also set up in 2017 as part of the *Major Investment Plan*, and dedicated to supporting VET for young school dropouts and jobseekers on the labour-market sideline;
- the *Grande École du Numérique*[100], a network set up from 2016 for training in digital professions, addressed in particular to young people on the employment sideline, to women, and to people from disadvantaged areas.

3.2. Flexibility and permeability

According to the Copenhagen Process and the Recommendation of 24 November 2020, VET programmes should be flexible and permeable. A programme is flexible if its participation rules accommodate learners' specific attendance constraints, for example through allowing learners on full time day work to take evening classes, or remote learners to take distance learning. A training programme is permeable if it is accessible at different levels of its processing (and not only at its beginning) through

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[99] In French: Programme d'Investissements d'Avenir (https://www.gouvernement.fr/un-programme-pour-investir-l-avenir)
[100] The Great School of Digital
https://www.grandeecolenumerique.fr/a-propos/qui-sommes-nous

equivalences and/or bridges from other training programmes. A permeable programme makes it possible, for example, to continue in a formal context a training course begun in a non-formal context. Permeability is understood here in the strict sense, which means that the learner may easily (without a heavy validation procedure) move from a training programme to another. Flexibility and permeability tend to lead to a trend towards individualisation of training paths.

In the views of the EU VET policy makers, flexibility and permeability are factors of inclusiveness. They widen the range of training opportunities available to all, and, as such, contribute to social equity and cohesion. In addition, flexibility and permeability support the actions undertaken to update the competences of the labour force and thus also promote the adaptation of economies to technological change and demographic ageing. Policymakers also deem that in order to be able to achieve their full effect, flexibility and permeability should apply not only in VET but also in general education and in higher education, so as to maximise the circulation of learners both from and to VET. Finally, they consider that making all segments of the education and training systems flexible and permeable would help achieve the objective of making the principle of lifelong learning a reality.

The EU VET policy therefore calls for measures for more programme flexibility and permeability. Modularising courses and certifications (especially by micro-

certifications[101] and learning credits) is a way towards this end. Modularisation allows capitalisation: the learner can over time accumulate parts of certifications or credits, the whole of which will ultimately equate to a full certification. Modularisation is therefore a flexibility tool at the service of the learner. It can also be used by educational institutions in the development of permeability.

At Community level, two major actions have been taken in favour of programme flexibility and permeability. The first one is the *European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training* – ECVET, initiated in 2009[102]. ECVET was intended to be the equivalent for VET of the ECTS (*European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*) set up in higher education as part of the Bologna Process in the early 2000s. ECVET aimed to allow the learner to accumulate learning credits and, where applicable, to transfer them, i.e., to use them for access to a training or certification other than the one(s) in which these credits were acquired. In the ECVET system, one year of full-time VET in a formal context was allocated 60 credit points, broken down by learning units (modules) making up the certificate. ECVET was therefore a tool likely to promote programme flexibility (through capitalisation) and permeability (through the fungibility of credit points). However, the evaluation of ECVET carried out by the Commission in 2019 (European Commission, 2019a) showed that after a decade of activity,

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[101] The *European Skills Agenda* published in 2020 by the Commission thus envisaged, in its Action 10, the development of a European standard for "micro-credentials". European Skills Agenda, 2020 (CELEX:52020DC0274)

[102] Recommendation 2009/C155/02 of 18 June 2009 (CELEX:32009H0708(02))

ECVET has not sufficiently convinced its potential users. In particular, the evaluation report indicates (p. 75) that in different Member States, the VET communities have been reluctant to use the ECVET system, considering that certifying a part of competence or qualification is irrelevant. The rationale behind is that referring to the learner's competence or qualification only makes sense if this competence or qualification is complete, resulting from a completed training process. Therefore, quality VET cannot accommodate partially certified parts of competences or qualifications. Based on the evaluation, the Recommendation of 24 November 2020 noted that "*the concept of ECVET points however was generally not applied and ECVET did not lead to the development of a European credit system in vocational education and training*". The Recommendation therefore terminated the ECVET system.

The second Community initiative in support of flexibility and permeability is more recent and is about micro-credentials . In the *European Skills Agenda* it published in 2020, the Commission envisaged (Action 10) the development of a European standard for micro-credentials. To this end, the Commission conducted in 2020 and 2021 consultations with experts, stakeholders, and the general public, and based on this prepared and submitted to the Council in December 2021 a proposal for a Recommendation[103] with a view to the adoption of a European approach to micro-credentials. The proposal sets out the definition and descriptors of micro-credentials, and invites Member States to encourage their use for the

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[103] Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (CELEX:52021DC0770)

purposes of inclusiveness and lifelong learning. This approach does not involve fungible points to be automatically recognised, as was the case in ECVET. However, the underlying idea of certifying parts of competences or qualifications remains, which raises questions about how well this move towards micro-credentials will be received by practitioners.

At Member State level, the Cedefop-ETF synthesis report on the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué (Cedefop, 2015, p. 81) indicates that in 2010, almost half of the Member States had no modularisation in their initial VET systems. Various Member States have since remedied this.

In French-speaking Belgium, Unit Certification[104] was introduced in vocational secondary education in 2011. The system consists of structuring each VET programme in the form of learning outcomes units, each unit comprising a "*coherent set of learning outcomes that can be assessed and validated*". The learner can thus gradually validate the different units until reaching the targeted training objective. The introduction of Unit Certification has been being carried out step by step, expanding to only a handful of new vocational specialties each year.

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[104] Unit Certification (in French): Site de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles - La certification par unité (http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26558&navi=331 0)

In Lithuania, a Ministerial Ruling[105] provided in 2015 for the modularisation of all initial and continuing VET programmes in the formal education and training system (Cedefop, 2020d, pp. 22–23).

In Latvia, the Law of 22 June 2017[106], which amended the 1999 Law on Vocational Education[107], paved the way for the modularisation of the VET system.

Also in Cyprus, the 2015–2020 Strategic Plan for Vocational Training provided for the modularisation of all initial and continuing VET programmes in the formal education and training system (Cedefop, 2020e, p. 22).

In the Netherlands, a Decision[108] of the Minister of Education authorised in 2016 private VET institutes (initial and continuing) to issue micro-certifications.

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[105] Ministerial ruling of 27 August 2010 (in Lithuanian): ŠVIETIMO IR MOKSLO MINISTRO 2010 M. RUGPJŪČIO 27 D. ĮSAKYMO NR. V-1435 (https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/b1d753f0d2b511e4bcd1a882e9a189f1)

[106] Law of 22 June 2017 (in Latvian): Grozījumi Profesionālās izglītības likumā (https://likumi.lv/ta/id/292030-grozijumi-profesionalas-izglitibas-likuma)

[107] Law on Vocational Education (in Latvian): Profesionālās izglītības likums (https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20244)

[108] Ministerial decision of 19 September 2016 (in Dutch): Regeling certificaten aantal keuzedelen beroepsonderwijs (https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stcrt-2016-50654.pdf)

In the same spirit, the French law of 5 September 2018[109] (Article 31) provided that "*professional certifications are made up of blocks of competences, which are homogeneous and coherent sets of competences contributing to the autonomous exercise of a professional activity and which can be evaluated and validated*".

Other types of national initiatives in support to permeability could also be observed.

In Greece, a Law of 26 February 2018[110] increased from 1% to 5% of total enrolments, the quota for vocational secondary education graduates authorised to enrol in university faculties and tertiary institutes of technology.

In Denmark, the EUX programme[111], gradually implemented in upper secondary education since 2010, offers both general and vocational education, so as to, at the

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[109] Article 31 of Law of 5 September 2018 (in French): Article 31 de la Loi n° 2018-771 du 5 septembre 2018 (https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/article_jo/JORFARTI00003 7367691)

[110] Implementation Decision of 20 March 2018 (in Greek) (http://www.et.gr/idocs-nph/search/pdfViewerForm.html?args=5C7QrtC22wG3UHk-ZeQumndtvSoClrL8xsZg9V1LBgh5MXD0LzQTLf7MGgcO23 N88knBzLCmTXKaO6fpVZ6Lx3UnKl3nP8NxdnJ5r9cmWyJW elDvWS_18kAEhATUkJb0x1LIdQ163nV9K-- td6SIuePGWzR9kTMwcc_q1mD0-t-Woo0YvIHa_iCxBTKUEcNl)

[111] EUX presentation (in Danish): Med eux tager du både en erhvervsuddannelse og en gymnasial eksamen (https://www.ug.dk/uddannelser/artikleromuddannelser/omerhver vsuddannelser/eux)

same time, provide learners with professional qualifications and give them access to higher education.

The approach adopted in Croatia establishes a systemic permeability of VET. The *VET System Development Programme 2016–2020*[112] defines VET programmes as components of a nested structure. A national framework for VET programmes sets their values, objectives, content, teaching approaches, and assessment methods. This national framework is then broken down into sectoral frameworks, in which the specificity of the economic sectors are taken into account, particularly concerning professional contents and practices. Finally, each VET institution develops its own training programme by adapting the framework of the sector in which it operates. The implementation at the school level makes it possible to consider local specificity, to respond as closely as possible to the needs of the local economy. At the same time, the commonalities between sectoral programmes, and between school programmes within the same sector, are likely to promote permeability.

3.3. Vocational guidance

Vocational guidance aims to help individuals to: (a) clarify their values, interests, competences, strengths, and weaknesses; (b) reflect lucidly on their background and experiences; (c) understand the educational and professional opportunities available to them; (d) devise coherent educational and career goals as well as plans to achieve these; and (e) make decisions for plan implementation.

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[112] VET System Development Programme (2016-2020), p. 9-11. (https://www.asoo.hr/UserDocsImages/VET_Programme_EN.pdf)

Guidance is a condition of inclusiveness. Guidance systems inform the target audience of the training offer addressed to them, the procedures for benefiting from it, the ways towards further studies and training, the flexibility and permeability opportunities available, and the opportunities, conditions and modalities for professional development and transition during working life. Therefore, inclusiveness requires effective and accessible lifelong vocational guidance systems, implemented in all segments of VET, whether initial or continuing, formal or non-formal.

EU VET policy therefore encourages the generalisation of inclusive vocational guidance systems. In particular, two Council Resolutions, adopted in 2004[113] and 2008[114], as well as the Bruges Communiqué, recommend developing learner career management competences, i.e., educating learners to self-manage their own vocational guidance, training, and career throughout life. The 2008 Resolution specifies that

"*career management skills play a decisive role in empowering people to become involved in shaping their learning, training and integration pathways and their careers*" and "*include learning about the economic environment, businesses and occupations; being able to evaluate oneself, knowing oneself and being able to describe the competences one has acquired in formal, informal and non-formal education settings;*

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[113] Draft Council Resolution 9286/04 of 18 May 2004 (https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST%209286%20 2004%20INIT/EN/pdf)

[114] Council Resolution 2008/C319/02 of 21 November 2008 (OJ:C:2008:319:0004:0007:EN:PDF)

understanding education, training and qualifications systems".

The Cedefop-ETF synthesis report on the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué (Cedefop, 2015, p. 81) indicates that in 2010, almost half of the Member States did not have guidance mechanisms in their VET systems. Various examples illustrate how the Community guidelines have been implemented at national level since then.

In the Netherlands, several actions have been undertaken to strengthen vocational guidance in the education and training systems. From 2011 to 2016, a website providing guidance tools was set up and piloted, with the support of the Ministry of Education. As of 2016, competency profiles for guidance professionals were designed. In 2017, the topic of vocational guidance was included in the criteria for evaluating programme quality in primary, general secondary, and vocational secondary education[115]; a centre of expertise in vocational guidance was established for all primary, secondary, and tertiary education (Cedefop, 2020f, pp. 25–26).

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[115] In the Netherlands, each educational institution defines its own curricula, entirely, or partly based on options proposed by the National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO), within the general framework of the educational policy and objectives set by the government. The programmes implemented by the institutions are evaluated by the Inspectorate of Education.

In Latvia, an Ordinance[116] of the Council of Ministers adopted in 2015 established an implementation plan for "*career education*" in general and vocational education. Career education is defined there as the educational process aimed at the acquisition of competences allowing the individual to collect, analyse and organise information about oneself, about available training offers, and about employment, and to make and implement decisions to manage one's education, career development, and life course.

In Luxembourg, a pilot project was set up in 2015 to develop a national reference framework for school and vocational guidance, and to structure guidance systems. In 2016, the guidance procedure in Cycle 4 of the basic school [117] was modified[118]: the start of the guidance process

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[116] Cabinet of Ministers Ordinance No. 821 of December 30, 2015 (in Latvian): Ministru kabineta rīkojums Nr. 821 (https://likumi.lv/ta/id/278999-par-karjeras-izglitibas-istenosanas-planu-valsts-un-pasvaldibu-visparejas-un-profesionalas-izglitibas-iestades-2015-2020)

[117] The basic school in Luxembourg consists of
- Cycle 1, including
  — one optional year of early education, for children who have reached the age of 3;
  — two years of compulsory pre-school education for children aged 4 and 5;
- and primary school, structured in three cycles of two years each, i.e.,
  — Cycle 2, for children aged 6 and 7;
  — Cycle 3, for children aged 8 and 9;
  — Cycle 4, for children aged 10 and 11.

[118] The educational and vocational guidance system (https://men.public.lu/en/themes-transversaux/orientation.html)

towards one or the other of the two paths ("classical" or "general") of secondary education[119] was brought forward from the 2nd year to the 1st year of Cycle 4; parents were from then on involved in the guidance process from its start, receiving information about the student's results and the study options available accordingly, and becoming co-decision makers of the orientation. In 2017, a law[120] restructured the *Maison de l'orientation* (the *Guidance House*, created in 2012) into a one-stop shop bringing together in the same place all the public administrations in the educational and vocational guidance sector. Its mission is to provide guidance and guidance education services to all categories of the population, without distinction of age. Article 12 of the law established the *Reference framework for educational and vocational guidance*[121], which sets the

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[119] Secondary education ("high school") offers two main paths: "classical" secondary education (preparing students with good knowledge of mathematics, French and German for university studies); and "general" secondary education (i.e., general education towards higher education for other students; technology education; and vocational education).

[120] Law of 22 June 2017 (in French): Loi du 22 juin 2017 sur la Maison de l'orientation
(https://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2017/06/22/a605/jo)

[121] Reference framework for educational and vocational guidance, March 2019 version (in French): Cadre de référence pour l'orientation scolaire et professionnelle
(https://men.public.lu/dam-assets/catalogue-publications/orientation/informations-generales/Cadre-de-r%C3%A9f%C3%A9rence-pour-l%27orientation-scolaire-et-professionnelle.pdf)

missions of guidance services and organises the action of educational institutions in the area of guidance.

In 2015 in Croatia, a career guidance site[122] for students and the labour force was set up and, still more importantly, an ambitious *Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance*[123] was established. The Strategy aimed to set up a national system of vocational guidance and career management education intended to be accessible, inclusive, and integrated, i.e., covering education and training systems as well as working life and social services. The vocational dimension had been considered too often neglected in the then prevailing school guidance system. The Strategy planned in particular to professionalise guidance counsellors, and to set up a quality assurance system for guidance services. As of 2016, *Lifelong Vocational Guidance Centres* have been cooperating with a wide range of local partners (especially local development agencies, social assistance centres, associations, educational institutions) to identify local needs and define appropriate career guidance services accordingly (Cedefop, 2020g, pp. 33–35).

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[122] E-guidance website (in Croatian): e-Usmjeravanje (https://e-usmjeravanje.hzz.hr/)

[123] Strategy for lifelong career guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016-2020 (https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/strategija_cpu_eng_kon_v2.pdf)

In Spain, the *Action Plan for Youth Employment 2019–2021*[124] also planned far-reaching measures. It provided (Actions 1, 2, 6, and 7) for the establishment, within the framework of the public employment service, of a network of 3,000 guidance advisors responsible for providing individualised vocational guidance services, including making a diagnosis, defining personalised roadmaps towards employment either in Spain or abroad (along with training actions if necessary), and providing information and assistance as well as long-term follow-up. The advisors were to receive prior training in orientation and placement in the labour market, and "*specific training in equal opportunities and the identification and eradication of biases based on gender or any other personal or social circumstance*".

In Poland , the Law of 14 December 2016[125] provided for the distribution of responsibilities for the organisation of vocational guidance, which was subsequently implemented by the Ordinance[126] of the Minister of Education dated 12

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[124] - Plan de Choque por el Empleo Joven (in Spanish) (https://www.sepe.es/HomeSepe/Personas/encontrar-trabajo/plan-de-choque-empleo-joven-2019-2021)
   - Action Plan for Youth Employment 2019-2021 (https://sepe.es/SiteSepe/contenidos/que_es_el_sepe/publicaciones/pdf/pdf_empleo/Plan-de-Choque-Empleo-Joven-2019-2021-ing.pdf)

[125] Education Act, Articles 47, 93, 98, and 123 (in Polish): USTAWA z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. – Prawo oświatowe (http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20170000059/T/D20170059L.pdf)

[126] Ordinance of 12 February 2019 on vocational guidance (in Polish): Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej1 z dnia 12 lutego 2019 r. w sprawie doradztwa zawodowego (https://www.dziennikustaw.gov.pl/D2019000032501.pdf)

February 2019. The Ordinance defined vocational guidance education programmes. Vocational guidance education is undertaken from an early age, as illustrated by the programme for nursery and pre-school classes (see Box 2 below).

Box 2.

Vocational guidance programme for kindergartens, pre-school units in primary schools, and other forms of pre-school education

1. Getting to know oneself

The child:

1.1 describes what he/she likes doing;

1.2 gives examples of what he/she has an interest in;

1.3 describes what he/she does well;

1.4 takes actions and describes what came out of these for him/her and for others.

2. The world of trades and the labour market

The child:

2.1 plays various professional roles;

2.2 gives the names of professions exercised by persons in his/her immediate vicinity; the names of professions that aroused his/her interest; identifies and describes the professional activities carried out by these persons;

2.3 indicates the trades involved in the development of everyday products and in the events he/she attends, for example, while going shopping, or at the concert, or at the post office;

2.4 tries to use tools and equipment as intended and in a creative and unconventional way;

2.5 talks about oneself in a peer group.

3. Education market and lifelong learning

The child:

3.1 names the stages of teaching (without it being necessary to follow the chronological order);

3.2 names the activities he/she likes to learn.

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4. Planning for own development and making educational and professional decisions

The child:

4.1 says what he/she would like to become;

4.2 to the best of his/her abilities, plans own activities or the activities of the peer group, indicating the individual activities and tasks necessary to achieve the objective;

4.3 tries to make decisions about issues important to him/her, individually and within peer group activities.

CHAPTER 4. WORK-BASED LEARNING

A major feature of the EU VET policy is the crucial importance it attaches to training being, for a significant part, provided in the workplace. Whether in initial or continuing VET, integrating training into the work situation enables the learner to better realise the link between the content taught and its practical scope. In IVET, immersion in a professional context has the advantage of making it possible to begin forging the learner's professional identity right from the training stage. Work immersion also enables the learner to early get a first idea of the reality of the profession and professional life. In the case of learners put off by the abstract nature of general education, the realistic and concrete nature of the learning that immersion allows for can have a remotivating effect, and can offer opportunities for achievement, success, and self-confidence and self-esteem strengthening. In the case of employed workers, integrating training into work allows people to train while continuing their jobs. Because of these different aspects, work immersion is regarded as a factor of inclusiveness. It is also perceived as a factor of employability. From employers' point of view, connecting the content taught with the reality of the work is a guarantee of the training's ability to make the learner operational. In addition, it is outlined that immersion training helps update the competences of the working force while maintaining the continuity of the production process.

The EU VET policy therefore recommends giving work immersion a central role in VET. The Recommendation of

24 November 2020[127] invites the Member States to contribute to the achievement of the Community objective that by 2025, 60% of recent[128] graduates from VET will have benefitted from exposure to work-based learning[129] during their vocational education and training. Given that vocational education includes not only professional content, but also general and theoretical content, immersion is meant to be in alternating mode, where school teaching phases alternate with on-the-job practice ones. The model can be declined in various ways and under different names (work-study training, work-based learning, work-integrated learning, work-related learning, workplace-based learning, dual VET, alternance training, etc.) depending on national practices and regulations. The EU approach defines two reference frameworks for all Member States, addressing traineeships and apprenticeships.

The Recommendation of 10 March 2014[130] defines traineeships as

> *a limited period of work practice, whether paid or not, which includes a learning and training component,*

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[127] Council Recommendation 2020/C417/01 of 24 November 2020 (CELEX:32020H1202(01))

[128] "*The age group 20-34, having left education and training 1-3 years ago*".

[129] "*This refers to work experiences at a workplace in a market or non-market unit (i.e. in a company, government institution or non-profit organisation) that were part of the curriculum of the formal programme that led to the highest level of education successfully completed.*"

[130] Recommendation 2014/C88/01 of 10 March 2014 (CELEX:32014H0327(01))

undertaken in order to gain practical and professional experience with a view to improving employability and facilitating transition to regular employment.

Under the terms of this Recommendation, traineeships – when not already governed by the regulations of general education or VET – must comply with principles guaranteeing at least minimum quality. Unless duly justified, traineeships should not last more than six months. They should be framed by a contract between the trainee and the host entity, specifying the learning objectives, the working conditions, the remuneration if any, and respective parties' rights and duties. A traineeship supervisor must be appointed with the mission of guiding the trainee in the tasks entrusted to him/her, and of monitoring and evaluating the trainee's progress. Working conditions must comply with social regulations. The trainee should be delivered a certificate attesting to the competences and qualifications acquired during the traineeship.

The Recommendation of 15 March 2018[131] defines apprenticeships. Apprenticeships may or may not be formal. Formal apprenticeship is structured (e.g., in terms of frameworks and standards for the targeted competences, for the training contents, and for assessment) to achieve identified learning objectives. According to this Recommendation, a VET programme is an apprenticeship programme if it is formal (a), and if it aims that the learner receives, in a school-workplace alternation mode (b), a paid (c) training leading to a nationally recognised qualification (d), based on a three-party contract (e) that the learner signs

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[131] Recommendation 2018/C153/01 of 15 March 2018 (CELEX:32018H0502(01))

with an employer and an educational institution. At least half of the training programme must be carried out through work immersion. Variations around this frame are possible, concerning, for example, the exact proportion of the programme to be carried out in immersion; whether the learner will receive a remuneration or instead an indemnification; or whether the contract should be bipartite, i.e., signed just by the learner and employer, instead of tripartite, as the Recommendation does not require the educational institution to sign the contract. The Recommendation calls for ensuring that the apprentice benefits from social protection and rules guaranteeing health and safety at work. Also, the Recommendation suggests considering accreditation procedures for work immersion sites; participation of social partners in programme design; and permeability between apprenticeship programmes and other training programmes.

In July 2013, a joint declaration[132] by the European social partner confederations, the Lithuanian Presidency of the European Council, and the Commission, launched the *European Alliance for Apprenticeships* (EAfA). The Alliance brings together States (EU Member States, EU candidate countries, Member States of the European Free Trade Association[133]) and stakeholders from these countries: companies; social partners; chambers of commerce, industry, and crafts; professional or sector organisations;

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[132]The Joint Declaration was subsequently supported by a Declaration of the European Council dated 18 October 2013: European Alliance for Apprenticeships – Council Declaration (https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST%2014986%202013%20INIT/EN/pdf)f

[133] Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland.

VET institutions; regions; youth organisations; research centres. The purpose of the Alliance is to promote apprenticeship. On top of exchanging information and networking, it provides its members with training and tools for the development of apprenticeship systems.

Member States, on their side, are invited to increase as much as possible the share of VET programmes to be delivered in immersion; establish clear institutional and regulatory frameworks for the practice of immersion; develop apprenticeship; provide educational institutions with legal and financial support in the company placement of trainees and apprentices but also of teachers and trainers keen to become more familiar with the business world; and encourage – in particular through financial and tax incentives – companies to take on apprentices and trainees, as well as teachers and trainers.

The Cedefop-ETF synthesis report on the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué indicates that in 2010, almost all Member States had some form of work-based training (Cedefop, 2015, pp. 35–36). The Community guidelines prompted reforms. The 2020 Cedefop-ETF synthesis report on the implementation of the Riga Conclusions (Cedefop, 2020a, pp. 42–51) shows that in 2019, all Member States had in place apprenticeship-type programmes (although at different stages of structuration and compliance with the criteria of the 2018 Recommendation). States that did not have such programmes before 2015 (Latvia , Slovakia , Czechia) have since established some; Slovenia, where apprenticeship no longer existed in the formal education and training system, has reactivated it; and the States that already had apprenticeship programmes (or similar ones) in place have

updated their content and operating rules, even innovating in some cases.

In Sweden, an apprenticeship system was in place well before 2015. However, it was unable to meet the demand for qualified staff in some narrow professional sectors: masonry, locksmithing, sawmill, flooring and tiling, horticulture, energy and electricity, and industrial maintenance. These sectors turned out to be both too specialised, representing a limited number of jobs, and attracting too few candidates, for the corresponding specialties, teaching competences, and the (sometimes expensive) equipment required, to be available in standard vocational high school. Based on previous experiences in sectors that had experienced similar problems in the past (in particular industrial sheet metal work and the professions of excavator and heavy construction machinery operators), a report[134] to the government proposed in 2015 the establishment of vocational schools. A vocational school is meant to be the single specialised training centre for a given professional sector countrywide. Vocational schools are intended to have the best teachers in their sector, and the most advanced equipment. The vocational school is supposed to be part of the apprenticeship system. It would receive for training internship high school students from all over the country interested in the specialisation offered. The internship would last between 15 and 20 weeks, spread over the second and third years of high school, i.e., 4 to 5 weeks per semester. The system is to be set up in collaboration with

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[134] *Choosing a profession*, Final report of the Vocational Programme Inquiry, Stockholm, 2015 (in Swedish): Välja yrke (https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/1ccc134ebc9645f199fc e4c82984ce81/valja-yrke-sou-201597.pdf)

the sector concerned, which is expected to provide practice places in the workplace. The proposal, translated into a bill, resulted in a law in June 2017, which entered into force on 1 August 2017, for a five-year experiment started in the fall of 2018.

In Italy, the reform of the apprenticeship system[135] innovated by introducing, alongside more traditional routes[136], the apprenticeship "*for higher education and research*" (Article 45 of the Decree of June 2015), a contract intended for higher education students aged 18 to 29. The contract is to be signed between the higher education institution and an employer and is to stipulate the terms and the training content of the immersion phase. The employer is supposed to pay the student for the work carried out in the company.

In France, after an experimental recruitment of 10,000 apprentices in the non-profit public sector in 2015 −2016,

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[135] Legislative decree No 81/2015 of 15 June 2015, Articles 43 to 45: Decreto Legislativo 15 giugno 2015, n. 81, *Gazzetta Ufficiale Della Republica Italiana*, Supplemento ordinario alla Gazzetta Ufficiale, n.144 del 24 giugno 2015 – Serie generale, pp. 25-27. (https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/gu/2015/06/24/144/so/34/sg/pdf)

[136] On the one hand, Article 43 of the Decree provides for apprenticeship "*with a view to a professional qualification and a diploma* " (paid work-study contract for young people aged 15 to 25 enrolled in the education system); on the other hand, Article 44 provides for "*professional*" apprenticeship (a contract for adults aged 18 to 29, oriented to training through work in a company, also including a maximum of 120 hours of teaching for the acquisition of basic and "transversal" competences, with a view to a professional qualification but not a certification).

Article 73 of the Law of 8 August 2016[137] also innovated by establishing apprenticeship as one of the routes to employment in the non-industrial non-commercial public sector. The apprentice, between the ages of 16 and 30, signs a fixed-term paid work contract with an administration and, in an Apprentice Training Centre, receives training leading to certification.

Traineeships too have been reformed. In France, the Law of 10 July 2014[138] incorporates the provisions of the EU Recommendation of 10 March 2014 on traineeships. The Commission's 2016 report on the implementation of the 2014 Recommendation (European Commission, 2016c) shows that between 2014 and 2016, seven more Member States[139] introduced the provisions of the Recommendation into their traineeship legislation. In France again, in 2015, a Circular from the Ministry of Education[140] created the *Traineeship Poles*, interfaces between the economic world and the education system with a view to pooling and developing the offer of traineeships.

Reforms have also addressed the school-based VET with in-company practical training, where the high-school

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[137] Law of 8 August 2016 (in French): Loi n° 2016-1088 (https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFARTI00003298433 9)

[138] Law of 10 July 2014 (in French): Loi n° 2014-788 (https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT00002922333 1)

[139] Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, Sweden.

[140] Circular of 25 February 2015 (in French): Circulaire n° 2015-035 (https://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/15/Hebdo9/MENE1505070C. htm?cid_bo=86521)

student does not sign a contract, does not receive any payment, and has the status of a student and not an employee. In French-speaking Belgium, the experimentation of workplace immersion, initiated in 2012 in vocational secondary education, was extended by a Circular of 2015[141]. Immersion on an alternating mode is intended to enable the learner to acquire the competences provided for by the official programme, and under the regular certification conditions. The learner is introduced to the corporate culture and may be required to participate in production as part of application exercises. The teacher remains responsible for teaching and leads the practical activities in collaboration with the tutor appointed by the company.

In Italy, one of the priority objectives assigned by the 2015 School Reform Law[142] to educational institutions is "*to increase school-work alternation in upper secondary education*" (Article 1 paragraph 7, point o). Paragraph 33 of Article 1 sets the number of hours to be devoted to workplace practice at a minimum of 200 for all three years of high school (400 hours minimum in vocational programmes).

In parallel, the Member States have taken initiatives aimed at closer involving the business world in the design

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[141] Circular of 17 September 2015 (in French): Circulaire n° 5416 du 17 septembre 2015
(https://gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/41396_000.pdf)

[142] Law of 13 July 2015 (in Italian): L. 13 iuglio 2015, n. 107 (1). Riforma del sistema nazionale di istruzione e formazione
(http://www.sistemaduale.anpal.gov.it/documentazione/Documents/Legge_13_luglio_2015_n._107.pdf)

and implementation of VET programmes. In the Czech Republic, for example, a 2017 amendment to school legislation generalised to all secondary vocational education the participation of employers in the development of teaching programmes. The amendment also provided for the participation of company practitioners in school teaching and school examinations (Cedefop, 2020h, pp. 10–14).

A longstanding principle of the EU VET policy is that IVET curricula should include experiences of transnational mobility. The Recommendation of 24 November 2020[143] invites Member States to contribute to ensuring that by 2025, at least 8% of each annual cohort of VET graduates across the EU have been able to benefit from mobility abroad as part of their training.

The importance of transnational mobility in initial VET stems from the importance of the principle of free movement of labour, one of the main objectives at the foundation of the EU. Making VET students familiar with transnational mobility is regarded as a way to prepare them to be mobile in their future professional life. Mobility readiness is of particular importance in the contemporary context marked, on the one hand, by local situations of unemployment here and labour/competences shortages there, and on the other hand by globalisation, in which companies need mobile workers for their internationalisation strategies.

The EU VET policy therefore recommends preparing learners for mobility, but also giving teachers and trainers opportunities to experience mobility by themselves, in order to be better able to support learners move[144]. Both the texts

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[143] Council Recommendation 2020/C417/01 of 24 November 2020 (CELEX:32020H1202(01))

[144] Recommendation 2001/613/EC of 10 July 2001 (CELEX:32001H0613)

of the Copenhagen Process and those from the institutional triangle in relation to mobility in VET emphasise the importance of developing linguistic and intercultural competences in VET, including in VET teachers and trainers. The need for addressing sector-specific work language is also outlined. Member States are invited to encourage chambers as well as sectoral and professional organisations to support enterprises that take part in transnational learner exchanges. They are requested to identify and remove the legal and administrative obstacles likely to hinder the transnational mobility of VET learners. They are also called to encourage regional authorities to develop a culture and strategies of transnational mobility.

In particular, the *Quality Charter for Mobility*[145], established in 2006, requires that participants in mobility programmes be provided with information, advice, and guidance services as well as support to handle – among others – insurance, social protection, and security issues. The Charter also requires that a training plan be established prior to departure, specifying the objectives of the mobility and its expected outcomes. Having in place on-site tutors to help mobile learners with local integration in the host country is also a quality requirement of the Charter. The Recommendation of 28 June 2011[146] draws attention to the needs for motivating learners to seize mobility opportunities; improving social recognition of the value of

[145] Recommendation 2006/961/EC) of 18 December 2006 (CELEX:32006H0961)

[146] Recommendation 2011/C199/01 of 28 June 2011 (CELEX:32011H0707(01))

mobility; ensuring the portability[147] of financial aid; and providing mobile learners with convenient and affordable accommodation, catering, and transport.

At Community level, the mobility policy has been implemented through various programmes organising and financing intra-EU exchanges of learners and educators as part of their initial or continuing VET.

From 1964 to 1984, three successive *Joint programmes for the exchange of young workers*[148] funded training periods abroad for young people aged 18 to 28, whether employed or unemployed, holders of basic VET or professional experience. The training period could be short (three weeks to three months) or long (four to sixteen months) and would take place in a company in a Member State other than the beneficiary's country of residence. The programmes aimed to enable beneficiaries to improve their professional knowledge and their knowledge of the working world, enrich their practical experience, and develop professional connections in the host country.

From 1986 to 1990, the *Comett* programme[149], which was intended to stimulate university-business cooperation for training in new technologies (in particular information and communication), funded scholarships for students and graduates to complete a training period in companies

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[147] Portability is about maintaining, during the transnational mobility, any subsidies, social benefits, scholarships, loans, and other financing which the learner used to receive before the mobility.

[148] - Decision 64/307/EEC of 8 May 1964 (CELEX:41964X0307)
- Decision 79/642/EEC of 16 July 1979 (CELEX:31979D0642)
- Decision 84/636/EEC of 13/12/1984 (CELEX:31984D0636)

[149] Decision 86/365/EEC of 24 July 1986 (CELEX:31986D0365)

established in another Member State. The programme also financed scholarships for staff from post-secondary education institutions seconded to a company in another Member State; and scholarships for company staff seconded to universities in another Member State.

From 1990 to 1994:

- the *Lingua* programme[150] (1990–1994), with the aim of contributing to improving the mastery of the languages of the Union, financed the participation of foreign language teachers in initial or continuing VET in Member States other than the beneficiary's residency country. The programme also funded the exchange of higher education teachers and administrators in the sector of foreign language teaching, to enable them to go to other Member States to organise inter-university programmes for cooperation in foreign language teaching;

- the *Force* programme[151] (1991–1994), focused on the development of CVET systems, funded scholarships for taking continuing training in another Member State, through either in-company placement or courses with a VET provider. The programme benefitted trainers, regional training specialists, executives from human resources departments, and company employees with staff representative functions;

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[150] Decision 89/489/EEC of 28 July 1989 (CELEX:31989D0489)
[151] Decision 90/267/EEC of 29 May 1990 (CELEX:31990D0267)

- the *Petra* programme[152] (1992–1994) offered mobility opportunities to young people under 28 who were either (a) in initial VET; or (b) holders of initial VET or professional experience, whether in employment or unemployed; or (c) taking part in an advanced training programme after leaving initial VET. The programme would fund their participation in VET or work placement in another Member State.

From 1995 to 2006, the *Leonardo* programme[153] took over from the *Comett*, *Force*, *Petra*, and *Lingua* programmes, and funded the placement in companies abroad of initial VET learners, as part of their courses, and of young workers. The *Leonardo* programme also financed transnational exchanges, between companies and training institutions, of trainers and administrators for the organisation of transnational training programmes; transnational exchanges of tutors, training managers, and human resource managers, as part of their continuing training; and transnational exchanges of language trainers and tutors, as part of their initial and continuing VET.

From 2007 to 2013, the *Lifelong Learning Programme*[154] brought together the *Comenius*, *Erasmus*, *Leonardo*, and *Grundtvig* programmes into a single umbrella framework, and funded transnational placements of IVET learners in

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[152] Decision 91/387/EEC of 22 July 1991 (CELEX:31991D0387)

[153] - Decision 94/819/EC of 6 December 1994 (CELEX:31994D0819)
- Decision 1999/382/EC of 26 April 1999 – Leonardo Phase 2, amended and consolidated version of 1st May 2004 (CELEX:01999D0382-20040501)

[154] Decision 1720/2006/EC of 15/11/2006 (CELEX:32006D1720)

enterprises. The programme also financed transnational placements and exchanges of trainers, guidance counsellors, managers of training establishments, and enterprise staff responsible for training planning and career guidance.

In 2009, the *Erasmus for young entrepreneurs* programme[155] was launched to finance the mobility of young entrepreneurs having recently created a business, or in the course of creating one, who wish to spend between one and six months in companies run by experienced entrepreneurs in another EU Member State, in order to enrich their experience, acquire knowledge, and build networks.

Since 2013, the *Erasmus+* programme[156], which now brings together the *Lifelong Learning* programme and the programmes of the Youth and Sport sectors, has been financing the transnational mobility of VET learners (including apprentices and trainees), graduates, and staff.

At Member State level, the *Erasmus+* programme is implemented by *Erasmus+ National Agencies*. Each National Agency finances the actions under the programme in accordance with the *Erasmus+ Regulation*. Cedefop's national practices tracking as part of the *Mobility*

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[155] First Call for proposals – Erasmus for young entrepreneurs (2009/C83/10) (CELEX:C2009/083/10). The programme was extended in 2014 and 2019, and then integrated in 2021 into the *Erasmus+* programme as "*social entrepreneurship*", under Key Action 2.

[156] - Regulation 1288/2013 of 11/12/2013 (CELEX:32013R1288)
- Regulation 2021/817 of 20 May 2021 (CELEX:32021R0817)
- *Erasmus+* Annual Reports can be downloaded from the website of the Publications Office of the European Union.

Scoreboard provides examples of good practices[157]. For example, in the area of informing IVET learners about the transnational mobility opportunities available to them, Finland has a system in place to cover both information and guidance needs. From the National Agency and the international service of their institution, learners in upper secondary vocational education can obtain personalised information on transnational mobility opportunities for the purposes of studies, practical training, or youth activities. From the teachers and guidance counsellors of their institutions, they can benefit from guidance services that consider international perspectives, and likely to enable them to make relevant mobility decisions based on an analysis of their interests, values, competences, past experience, and career plans.

Another group of good practices relates to the preparation and conduct of stays abroad. In French-speaking Belgium and Finland, the preparation phase has been reinforced by introducing, alongside general language courses, specialised courses on professional vocabulary and culture (customs, attitudes, rules of punctuality and politeness, etc.) of the host country. As for the course of the stay, Sweden insists on the role of the supervisors in ongoing monitoring and evaluating progress in respect of the learning objectives. Emphasis is also placed on using the full range of media (including blogs and videoblogs) adapted to the communication uses familiar to the group of learners.

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[157] Cedefop website – Mobility Scoreboard Database – Good practices (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/mobility-scoreboard/good-practices)

Several Member States have also developed specific actions for IVET learners belonging to disadvantaged groups (especially learners with special needs, or with disabilities, or from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds), so as to encourage them to participate in transnational mobility. In Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, and Lithuania, targeted information actions have been being deployed through public meetings, individual appointments, and via various media (including paper brochures, websites, videoblogs, webinars, and social networks). The information provided covers the opportunities offered, the potential positive effects of mobility, the special arrangements available (appointment of an accompanying person, psychological and professional preparation, transport, accommodation, specific work equipment), and the specific funding available for these categories of beneficiaries.

CHAPTER 6. TRANSPARENCY, VALIDATION, RECOGNITION

*I*n the national arena, there are multiple pathways for acquiring knowledge and competences. It is even more so for the EU taken as a whole. These acquisition paths differ in their subjects, durations, learning contents, learning objectives, levels of depth, institutional contexts, learning conditions, learning environments, pedagogical approaches, assessment methods, and their intended or actual educational and/or professional outcomes. Having tools and procedures to identify, validate, and recognise learning pathways, learning outcomes, and certifications, is essential to facilitate learner mobility from a learning path to another or from learning to work, whether within a country or between countries. Transparency, validation, and recognition are of crucial importance in the EU, a major objective of which is the free movement of labour. This is even more true in a contemporary context marked on the one hand by demographic ageing (which raises the need for attracting extra-EU competences), and on the other hand by unsolicited migration, both of which require to have in place validation and recognition procedures to facilitate the integration of immigrants into EU labour markets.

From the EU VET policy perspective, transparency, validation, and recognition support not only mobility for educational or professional purposes, but also permeability and modularisation (therefore flexibility) and hence VET inclusiveness and social equity and cohesion. In addition,

transparency instruments facilitate vocational guidance. Transparency, validation, and recognition also support employability when job applicants do not hold certificates attesting to their qualifications. Finally, transparency, validation and recognition contribute to making lifelong learning possible.

6.1. Transparency

A prerequisite for validation and recognition is to identify the learning pathway or outcome or the certification to be validated or recognised. Identification can be defined as the process of characterising a learning pathway, or a learning journey/experience, or a learning outcome, or a certification, in terms of criteria established to this end in a reference typology. Transparency facilitates identification. Transparency is the specification and clarification of the characteristics of learning pathways, learning journeys/experiences, learning outcomes, and certifications, in view of allowing for their identification. Therefore, to facilitate identification in the Member States, the EU has developed transparency tools.

Two main transparency tools have been put in place, *Europass* and the *European Qualifications Framework* (EQF). A third tool, created in 2009 but abandoned after testing, is the ECVET credit transfer system, which also

included transparency tools[158]. ECVET was phased out[159] not only because of resistance to the idea of micro-qualification[160], but also because its transparency instruments were considered by users as redundant compared to *Europass* and less convenient to use (European Commission, 2019a, pp. 60 and 75–76).

Europass and the EQF aim to support the transparency of learning pathways, learning journeys/experiences, learning outcomes, and certifications, for the purposes of either pursuing learning or accessing employment, in intra-national and transnational mobility.

Europass[161], certainly one of the best-known achievements of the EU education and training policies, was

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[158] In the ECVET system, a vocational certification is made up of several Units of learning outcomes ("units"), each unit comprising a "*coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence, that can be assessed and validated*". Units are "*described in legible and understandable terms by referring to the knowledge, skills and competences contained in them*", and specify "*the procedures and criteria for assessment of these learning outcomes*". In addition, in the case where a learner carries out a transnational mobility within the framework of a partnership between two institutions, the hosting institution draws up, at the end of the mobility, a "*personal transcript*", i.e., "*a document which details the learners' assessed learning outcomes, units and ECVET points awarded*". Based on the transcript, the home institution recognises the learning outcomes acquired abroad, which "*gives rise to the award of the units and their corresponding ECVET points, according to the rules of the 'home' system*".

[159] Council Recommendation 2020/C417/01 of 24 November 2020 (CELEX:32020H1202(01))

[160] See Section 3.2, page 57.

[161] Decision 2241/2004/EC (CELEX:32004D2241)

created in 2004 to integrate into a single framework, and generalise, transparency tools that had been put in place over the preceding years, in particular *Europass Training* and the European CV format[162]. In its initial version, the *Europass* portfolio included the Europass-CV, the Europass-Mobility (record of education and training undergone in another Member State), the Diploma Supplement (detailed information on educational achievements at higher education level), the Certificate Supplement (description of the acquired competences and qualifications as attested by a vocational training certificate), and the Language Portfolio (presenting the language competences). The 2018 Decision renewing *Europass*[163] called for further developments, including the provision of web-based tools for competences assessment and self-assessment; and the provision of information on

- learning opportunities;
- qualifications and national qualifications frameworks;
- opportunities for validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- recognition practices and laws in Member States and third countries;

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[162] - *Europass Training*, set up in 1998 and intended to certify a "European pathway", i.e., a period of work-based training carried out by a person in another Member State. Council Decision 1999/51/EC of 21 December 1998 (CELEX:31999D0051)

- The common European format for CVs, created in 2002 by the Commission Recommendation 2002/236/EC of 11 March 2002 (CELEX:32002H0236)

[163] Decision 2018/646 of 18 April 2018 (CELEX:32018D0646)

- guidance services for transnational learning mobility and career management;
- labour market demand for competences and qualifications;
- the competences, qualifications, and certifications which immigrants may need for their integration.

The *European Qualifications Framework* (EQF) was introduced in 2008[164] and revised in 2017[165]. The EQF establishes an eight-level structure aimed to accommodate all certifications that exist in the EU. Each level is characterised by three categories of descriptors: "knowledge" (defined as a "*body of facts, principles, theories and practices*"); "skills" ("*the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems*"); and the learner's abilities in terms of autonomy and taking responsibility ("*the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility*"). The implementation of the EQF therefore requires that the traditional way of describing learning in terms of institutional context, the duration of training, and content taught, gives way to a description in terms of "knowledge", "skills", and "responsibility and autonomy". The EQF thus opens way to identifying each certification by using its descriptors, and to establishing correspondence and comparison between any certification and any other one, provided that both of them are described in terms of the EQF descriptors. The implementation of the EQF required each

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[164] Recommendation 2008/C111/01 of 23 April 2008 (CELEX:32008H0506(01))

[165] Recommendation 2017/ C189/03 of 22 May 2017 (CELEX:32017H0615(01))

Member State to decline the EQF in the form of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), each NQF having to comply with the overarching structure and the principles of the EQF, for correspondence between NQFs and correspondence between certifications to be possible. The verification of the conformity of an NQF to the EQF takes place through a so-called "referencing" process. Referencing is carried out in two stages (European Commission, 2013). At the national level first, the institution in charge of the general coordination of the NQF (the National Coordination Point)[166] collaborates with the relevant stakeholders (for example the authorities in charge of higher education, those responsible for VET, economic chambers) as well as with international experts to break down the existing certifications by EQF level. The national-level stage ends up with establishing a referencing report. The report is then presented to the EQF Advisory Group[167], an expert group of the European Commission responsible for verifying the compliance of NQFs to the EQF. The Group declares the NQF officially referenced when it considers that the ten referencing criteria set by the Recommendation have been met. The procedure is repeated when substantial changes in the national certification system affect the correspondence

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[166] List of National Coordination Points: European Commission website – European Qualifications Framework – National Coordination Points (https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2237)

[167] Mission, composition, and documents of the EQF Advisory Group: European Commission website – European Qualifications Framework Advisory Group (https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&groupID=2107)

between the NQF and the EQF. The national reports of the *European Inventory on NQF* series[168] published by Cedefop allow for following the developments of NQFs in the Member States.

6.2. Validation

Validation can be defined as the formal process of authorising a duly identified learning pathway, or learning journey/experience, or learning outcome, or certification, to give access to pursuing learning, or to a certification, or to a labour market opportunity.

In 2012, a Recommendation on validation[169] prompted Member States to put in place, by 2018 at the latest, methods for validating non-formal and informal learning to obtain partial or full certification. The Recommendation defines validation as a process involving four stages:

- identifying the learning outcomes that the person has achieved;
- documenting these achievements, i.e., collecting the relevant supporting documents and evidence;
- evaluating these achievements;
- certifying the assessment results.

At Member State level, various actions have been taken to develop validation. A trailblazer in this area is the French system for the validation of studies and professional or

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[168] Cedefop website – European Inventory on NQF (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/european-inventory-on-nqf)

[169] Council Recommendation 2012/C398/01 of 20 December 2012 (CELEX:32012H1222(01))

personal experience ("VAP") set up in 1984[170], for the purpose of accessing higher education. The French VAP addressed any non-formal education or training, any professional experience acquired through work (including self-employment) or traineeships, and any learning outcomes from informal education. Validation could be requested from a higher education institution (HEI). HEIs had to define their validation procedures in accordance with regulatory guidelines. They were obligated to make a reasoned final decision on each validation request submitted to them. In 2002, the *Social modernisation Law*[171] opened the right to the validation of professional experience ("VAE") as a way for obtaining a VET or higher education certification (or part of a certification), which goes beyond the mere right to access a programme preparing for a certification. In this second-generation validation system, validation can be requested based on a three-year minimum professional experience in a subject which is identical or close to that of the requested certification.

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[170] - 1984 Law on higher education, Article 5 (in French): Loi n° 84-52 du 26/01/1984
(https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000000692733)

- 1985 Decree on validation (in French): Décret n° 85-906 du 23/08/1985
(https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000000689033)

[171] The Social modernisation Law (in French): Loi n° 2002-73 du 17/01/2002, especially Articles 134 and 137
(https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000000408905)

The EU impulse pushed for initiatives in other Member States. According to the report published in 2020 by the European Commission on the implementation of the 2012 Validation Recommendation (European Commission, 2020a), 19 Member States (not to mention the United Kingdom) had in 2012 mechanisms for the validation, by the formal education system, of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. The systems then in place were of varying degrees of development, with France standing out as the only Member State where any formal certification could be obtained from the validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. Three other Member States (Finland, the Netherlands, and Portugal) had well-established validation systems. In six other Member States (Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Romania, Spain, and Sweden) the validation system either had a limited scope only, or was in its initial development phase. Mechanisms with a still more restricted scope also existed in Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Austria, for example, did not have a general legal framework for validation, and its legislation did not provide for any right of individuals to validation, but there were "*non-traditional*" methods for accessing higher education through specific validation mechanisms, for example for the access to applied science programmes for people not holding the secondary school leaving diploma but with relevant professional experience (European Commission et al., 2014, pp. 3−7). In the other Member States, some validation mechanisms existed, but they did not apply to formal education and rather aimed at having the non-formal sector confirm professional qualifications demonstrated by people who did not hold certifications.

Six years later, in 2018, as shown by the monitoring jointly carried out by Cedefop, the European Commission and the ETF (Cedefop et al, 2019), most Member States had in place validation mechanisms allowing to obtain at least part of a formal certification, based on non-formal or informal learning outcomes.

However, engaging in a validation process is demanding for learners, and the necessary resources (guidance, support, funding) are not always sufficiently available. The coverage of potential beneficiaries is also incomplete. At the end of 2018, only seven Member States (Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Sweden) as well as French-speaking Belgium had a complete validation system covering all audiences and segments of the education and training system. The synthesis report (Cedefop et al., 2019) and the country reports[172] of the *European inventory on validation* series, published by the Commission, Cedefop, and the ETF, make it possible to follow the developments of validation systems in the Member States.

6.3. Recognition

A learning journey or outcome achieved across an entity (an institution or a State) is considered recognised in another entity (the hosting entity) if, in that other entity, the journey or outcome gives the person who has achieved it the rights normally attached to a similar learning experience or

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[172] Cedefop website – European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning
(https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/european-inventory-on-validation?search=&year=&country=&sort_order=DESC&items_per_page=24&page=0)

learning outcome achieved in the hosting entity. These rights include access to educational or professional opportunities (further study or position in the labour market) normally available to the learning experience or learning outcome in the hosting entity[173].

At Community level, a process was started in the early sixties to coordinate the qualification and certification requirements to be imposed on workers from other Member States to access a country's labour market. Coordinating texts were adopted and then updated and consolidated by the 2005 Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications[174], which itself was later revised in 2013[175].

Regarding the recognition of foreign qualifications for the purpose of access to education and training, the need for Union intervention arouse at the end of the 2010s. Despite the implementation of transparency tools and validation

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[173] The conceptual difference between *validation* and *recognition* is not obvious. In both cases, it is about enabling a person to move from a learning pathway to another, or from a learning pathway to employment. In practice however, for EU VET policy players, *validation* is generally referred to when it comes to addressing the issue of people moving from a non-formal or informal learning pathway or learning outcome towards formal learning or formal certification, within a country; whereas referring to *recognition* rather suggests that the issue is about people moving from a learning pathway, or a learning outcome, or a professional qualification, or a certification, in a Member State, to another learning pathway, or to a certification, or to the labour market, in another Member State.

[174] Directive 2005/36/EC of 7 September 2005 (OJ:L:2005:255:0022:0142:fr:PDF)

[175] Directive 2013/55/EU of 20 November 2013 (CELEX:32013L0055)

mechanisms, serious obstacles to the recognition of qualifications for education and training purposes remained. In 2018, taking stock of practices of qualification recognition for education and training purposes (European Commission, 2018a), the European Commission, based in particular on a study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2017, pp. 81–84), noted that in several Member States, the costs incurred by those applying for qualification recognition can reach high levels (see Table 1 below), which are likely to have a deterrent effect.

Moreover, not only can the recognition process be expensive, but it can also be lengthy. The same OECD study (pp. 22–23) shows that the legal time limit for processing applications for the recognition of foreign qualifications can be up to five months, or even not capped at all (see Table 2 below).

In addition, the process can be complicated. Such is the case in particular for the recognition, by upper secondary education, of (a) long education and training periods (three months or more) carried out abroad without prior agreement between educational institutions, if the learning experience abroad was not certified; and (b) learning experiences or learning outcomes achieved abroad as declared by immigrants. The Commission relies here on a study by the *European Federation for Intercultural Learning* (Briga, 2018). The study contrasts the two recognition practices observed in 23 EU Member States. The first practice, the simplest for the learner, consists of basing the recognition decision on the attendance certificate issued by the foreign institution. This is the usage followed in Austria, Denmark,

Table 1

Costs borne by an applicant for the recognition of foreign qualifications or prior learning experiences and outcomes – 2016

	Recognition of foreign qualifications	Recognition of prior learning experiences or outcomes
Austria	From 40 to 350 Euro depending on the case	/
Finland	From 213 to 340 Euro depending on the case	Free
France	70 euro	Between 300 and 2000 Euro
Germany	Between 100 and 600 Euro depending on the case	Between 300 and 1200 Euros
Greece	Between 100 and 415 Euro depending on the case	50 Euro per certificate
Hungary	From 268 to 357 Euro	/
Netherlands	Free	Between 1000 and 1500 Euro
Poland	Up to 570 Euro	Variable
Sweden	Up to 1004 Euro depending on the case	Up to 1091 Euro depending on the case

Source: adapted from OECD, 2017, p. 81–84.

Table 2

Legal deadline for processing requests for the recognition of foreign qualifications – 2016

Austria	Between 90 and 120 days depending on the case
Belgium	▪ Wallonia: 160 days ▪ German-speaking Belgium : 90 to 120 days
Czechia	Between 30 and 90 days
Denmark	Between 90 and 120 days depending on the case
Estonia	No legal limit
Finland	Between 90 and 120 days
France	Between 90 and 120 days depending on the case
Germany	Between 90 and 120 days depending on the case
Greece	Between 60 and 120 days depending on the case
Hungary	60 days
Ireland	84 days
Italy	Between 90 and 120 days depending on the case
Latvia	Up to 120 days
Lithuania	Between 30 and 90 days depending on the case
Luxembourg	90 days
Netherlands	Between 28 and 60 days depending on the case
Poland	Between 7 and 90 days depending on the case
Portugal	30 days or more depending on the case
Slovenia	60 days
Spain	90 days
Sweden	Between 90 and 120 days depending on the case

Source: adapted from OECD, 2017, p. 22–23.

Finland, Italy, and Sweden. The second recognition practice, which is more constraining for the learner and therefore likely to discourage the desire for transnational mobility, consists of checking the content of the courses followed abroad, checking the transcript of the marks obtained in these courses, and requiring as necessary the learner to take additional courses or to repeat a year of study. This is the practice in Germany, French-speaking Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain. The study shows that in several Member States, the treatment applied to learning experiences and learning outcomes is the same when they have been achieved abroad, whether in another Member State or outside the EU.

Therefore, a 2018 Recommendation on recognition[176] invited Member States to take, by 2025, the necessary measures to achieve automatic mutual recognition between Member States of education qualifications and learning outcomes, so that:

- ▪ a higher education qualification acquired in one Member State is automatically recognised in the other Member States at the same level, for the purpose of access to further studies;
- ▪ a qualification obtained in upper secondary education, and giving access to higher education in the Member State where this qualification was obtained, is recognised in the other Member States for the purpose of access to higher education;

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[176] Council Recommendation 2018/C444/01 of 26 November 2018 (CELEX:32018H1210(01))

- the outcomes of a learning period carried out in higher education in one Member State are automatically and fully recognised in the other Member States;
- the outcomes of a learning period, lasting up to one year, carried out in upper secondary education in a Member State, are recognised in any other Member State, without the learner having to repeat this school year.

The Recommendation is likely to help solve the cost, time length, and complexity issues for the addressed categories of qualifications and learning outcomes. Of particular interest is the fact that it covers not only certifications but, more generally, qualifications. However, the Recommendation does not cover secondary education qualifications other than those giving access to higher education, nor periods of learning abroad in secondary education lasting longer than one year.

In its Communication of 30 September 2020[177] (p. 27), the Commission scheduled for 2022 the publication of a report on the implementation of the 2018 Recommendation on recognition.

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[177] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (com/2020/625 final) (CELEX:52020DC0625)

CHAPTER 7. QUALITY

*Q*uality improvement is a recurring theme in the EU VET policy. Quality is sought in three ways: improving the education and training of educators, developing quality assurance, and promoting international platforms of centres of professional excellence. Quality itself plays a crucial role in the EU approach to VET. Quality assurance, in particular, may be a powerful factor of mutual trust among educational institutions and among Member States when it comes to learning processes which they were not part of. Quality assurance can therefore contribute to enhancing validation, recognition, and mobility. More generally, VET quality is likely to promote learner confidence in VET, hence improve its attractiveness, and consequently strengthen the chances of making the principle of lifelong learning a reality. VET quality can also improve the confidence of employers in job applicants with a VET background, thus promoting their employability, and consequently increase employment. Finally, the higher the VET quality, the more qualified, effective, and productive the workforce trained through VET, and the better VET can exert its positive effects on economic growth and efficiency.

7.1. Improving the education and training of educators

In the EU VET policy perspective, better training teachers, trainers, instructors, mentors, tutors as well as guidance counsellors, is seen as an essential condition for the

quality of VET systems. The Recommendation of 24 November 2020[178] invites Member States to ensure that:

> *Teachers, trainers and other staff in vocational education and training undertake initial and continuing professional development in order to: deliver high quality training; foster technical and digital skills and effective innovative training methods, including teaching in virtual environment; in line with state of the art vocational and digital pedagogy, work with digital learning tools, and in diverse and multicultural environments.*

Further, the texts of the Copenhagen Process recommend that improvement actions also take into account the need for making education professions more attractive, so as to encourage an increased flow of vocations to compensate for demographic ageing in these professions. Attractiveness implies, in particular, being able to offer potential candidates more diversified paths to these professions (especially facilitating the access of practitioners from the business world); and to offer current educators flexible terms for their continuing VET, in-company internships for staff of educational institutions, opportunities for in-company trainers to strengthen their teaching competences, and opportunities for qualifications validation for non-certified educators. These directions are in line with the more general orientations set by the Council Conclusions of 25 May 2020 on the *European teachers and trainers for the future*[179].

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[178] Council Recommendation 2020/C417/01 of 24 November 2020 (CELEX:32020H1202(01))

[179] Council conclusions 2020/C193/04 of 25 May 2020 (CELEX:52020XG0609(02))

Over the last decade, various Member States have updated their educator training systems according to these guidelines. The reforms have addressed both initial and continuing VET for teachers and trainers including company staff participating in training activities. Cedefop's series *Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of VET*[180] presents the state of play and reforms by Member State in the early 2010s. For the period 2015−2019, the 2020 Cedefop-ETF synthesis report on the implementation of the Riga Conclusions (Cedefop, 2020a, pp. 70–74) as well as the national reports of the series *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–19*[181] indicate that various Member States (for example Bulgaria and Italy) have started strengthening pre-service programmes for future VET teachers. This was done by reinforcing pedagogy and didactic contents (for example in Austria, Denmark, and Estonia), professional contents (for example in Malta), and professional practice (for example in France[182] and Luxembourg).

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[180] Cedefop website – Supporting teachers and trainers (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/teachers-and-trainers)

[181] Cedefop website – National policy developments in vocational education and training (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/vet-policy-developments)

[182] The Student Apprentice-Teacher system set up in 2015-2016 and subsequently transformed into a pre-professionalisation contract (in French): Étudiant Apprenti Professeur (https://vocationenseignant.fr/etudiant-apprenti-professeur-eap/)

In the Netherlands, the *Quality Framework for Instructors*[183], which entered into force in August 2018, upgraded the recruitment requirements for VET instructors, who, in VET institutions, are responsible for supporting teaching activities, especially supervising traineeships. Following the reform, instructors must now have professional knowledge and competences at least equal to those of the level of the study programme in which they work, as attested by a certification or relevant professional experience of at least three years. They must also have certified knowledge in pedagogy and didactics.

Some country-level reforms also addressed the issues of salary increase (in Austria, Czechia, and Latvia), access routes diversification (in the Netherlands), and in-company internships for teachers (in Belgium[184], Czechia, Poland, and Slovenia).

In-service training for teaching staff has also been strengthened, often in the form of one-off training programmes intended to support teachers (and sometimes workplace trainers, tutors, and mentors) in the implementation of VET reforms. Such was the case, for

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[183] Quality Framework for Instructors (in Dutch): Kwaliteitskader bekwaamheidseisen voor instructeurs (https://www.mboraad.nl/sites/default/files/publications/kwaliteit skader_bekwaamheidseisen_voor_instructeurs.pdf)

[184] In French: Programme Entr'Apprendre (https://entrapprendre.be/)

example, of the *Parasta osaamista* project[185] for the continuous training of VET teachers and company trainers in Finland from 2017 to 2019. Such was also the case of the *Testing new approaches to training VET and workplace tutors for work-based learning – TTT4WBL* project, in which the three Baltic countries were involved from 2017 to 2020 for training actions to support VET teachers and company tutors in the implementation of work-study training and apprenticeship reforms (Cedefop, 2020i, pp. 14–15). Projects aimed at administrative and management staff of VET institutions have also been implemented, for example in Latvia the National Centre for Education's project on the *Effective management of vocational education institutions and improvement of personnel competence*[186] (Cedefop, 2020i, pp. 44–45).

More structural approaches have also been adopted. In Cyprus, for example, Council of Ministers Decision No. 79.273 of 19 August 2015 introduced the *Teacher Professional Learning* (TPL) Initiative (Cedefop, 2020e, p. 35). The system consists of training programmes designed on an institution-by-institution basis, through selecting programme items from a national list, according to the specific needs of the teachers in the institution. The training

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[185] *Parasta osaamista* project report (in Finnish): Selvitys parasta osaamista -verkostohankkeesta (https://www.oph.fi/fi/tilastot-ja-julkaisut/julkaisut/selvitys-parasta-osaamista-verkostohankkeesta)

[186] Ministry of Education website (in Latvian): Profesionālās izglītības iestāžu efektīva pārvaldība un personāla kompetences pilnveide (https://www.visc.gov.lv/lv/projekts/profesionalas-izglitibas-iestazu-efektiva-parvaldiba-un-personala-kompetences-pilnveide)

may take place inside the institution and/or outside. The system is run within a collaborative framework involving the school management, the teachers, and a local programme coordinator, with the assistance of a dedicated network of specialised university academics. The TPL covers general education (primary and secondary) as well as vocational education. The 2007 evaluation of the TPL Initiative suggested that its guiding principles are in line with the expectations of teachers, although with stronger support among primary teachers than among those in secondary education and VET (IPA, 2017, pp. 33–40).

Finally, the qualifications of company personnel involved in work-study training activities have also been addressed. In Latvia, the Regulation of 15 July 2016[187] (Article 10) introduces qualification requirements for access to the functions of apprenticeship supervisor in a company. A certification as a master craftsperson issued by the Latvian Chamber of Trades is therefore required, as well as a VET background in the subject taught (or otherwise a professional experience of at least three years), and at least 72-hour training in teaching. In France, a Ministerial Circular of 2015[188] states that the apprenticeship supervisor must "*have*

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[187] Regulation of Cabinet of Ministers No. 484, 15 July 2016 – Procedures for the organisation and implementation of work-based learning (in Latvian): Kārtība, kādā organizē un īsteno darba vidē balstītas mācības (https://likumi.lv/ta/id/283680-kartiba-kada-organize-un-isteno-darba-vide-balstitas-macibas)

[188] Circular of 8 April 2015 (in French): Circulaire du ministère du Travail en date du 8 avril 2015 relative à l'apprentissage dans le secteur public non-industriel non-commercial (https://www.fhf.fr/content/download/96489/706462/version/1/file/Circulaire+08+04+2015+apprentissage.pdf)

*been working for at least three years in a professional
capacity the access to which attests to a qualification at least
equivalent to that covered by the diploma or title prepared
by the apprentice*". Similar developments have taken place
in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Malta.

7.2. Quality assurance

Quality assurance can be defined as a process
implemented during the production of a product or service
and consisting in applying protocols intended to guarantee
that measures have been taken to allow this product or
service meet predefined expectations. Quality assurance
does not guarantee that the product or service in question
will actually meet the expectations, but just that the
conditions conducive to meeting the expectations have been
put in place.

The EU VET area is characterised by the voluntary
cooperation of the Member States with a view to have their
VET policies converge so that mutual recognition of
learning can be enhanced, and the free movement of learners
reinforced. Prerequisites for cooperation and mutual
recognition are that Member States may trust each other
regarding their respective VET policies; the value of the
resulting achievements and the reliability of the comparisons
based on these; and the quality of learning, learning
assessment, and learning certification carried out in the other
Member States. Establishing common standards for
approaching VET, and making sure these are applied by all,
is a factor conducive to mutual trust.

EU VET policy makers have therefore opted for
introducing quality assurance procedures to be implemented
by the Member States and all VET providers in all VET

systems and programmes. The Recommendation of 18 June 2009[189] set up a *European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET* (EQAVET)[190]. The EQAVET follows a PDCA-type four-stage approach[191] where each stage represents a "quality criterion" the descriptors for which the Recommendation provides an indicative and optional list:

- **Step 1: Plan**

  Descriptors: procedures for identifying needs are in place, objectives are set, outcome indicators defined, stakeholders mobilised, etc.

- **Step 2: Implement**

  Descriptors: action plans are in place, guidelines and standards have been designed, resource analysis has been carried out, responsibilities have been distributed, etc.

- **Step 3: Assess**

  Descriptors: an evaluation method is in place, the roles for implementing it have been distributed, performance indicators are applied[192], data collection takes place, etc.

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[189] Recommendation 2009/C155/01 of 18 June 2009 (CELEX:32009H0708(01))

[190] The EQAVET was subsequently updated by the Recommendation of 24/11/2020 (CELEX:32020H1202(01))

[191] PDCA is a management method in four stages: Plan – Do/Develop – Check/Control – Adjust.

[192] The Recommendation lists some possible optional performance indicators.

- **Step 4: Review**
  Descriptors: review procedures are in place, evaluation results are made public, adjustment plans are designed, adjustment takes place.

The EQAVET Recommendation and the texts of the Copenhagen Process call on Member States not only to apply the EQAVET principles but also to have their public and private VET providers doing the same in initial and continuing VET, either in formal and non-formal contexts, and including in activities in relation to validation, certification, recognition, and mobility[193]. The Recommendation and the Copenhagen Process also call for taking action to ensure that the training offer matches the competences and qualifications needs of the economy.

Implementing the EQAVET nationwide

The EQAVET Recommendation calls on Member States to develop a national strategy for improving quality assurance systems in VET; set up a *National Reference Point* for quality assurance in VET; and implement EQAVET at national, regional, and local levels.

The Cedefop-ETF synthesis reports on the implementation of the Bruges Communiqué (Cedefop, 2015, pp. 24–29) and the Riga Conclusions (Cedefop, 2020, pp. 51–57) show that all Member States have, since 2010, implemented or updated their national quality assurance strategies for VET. Slovenia, for example, developed between 2015 and 2019 a quality assurance system for the entire formal education and training system at the primary

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[193] However, the Recommendation does not cover vocational guidance.

and secondary education levels, including a quality assurance framework with outcome indicators in terms of not only learning, but also of social climate, leadership, and teacher professional development (Cedefop, 2020j, pp. 17–18).

Member States have also set up the *National Reference Points* for quality assurance. Actions have also been carried out to set up quality assessment and self-assessment systems (self-assessment guides, methods, and criteria) in VET institutions (for example in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France[194], and Malta).

Adapting the training offer to the qualifications needs of the economy

VET quality also depends on the labour market relevance of programme contents. Member States must therefore continuously adjust VET programmes according to both observed trends and foreseeable developments in the labour market, production technologies, demand for goods and services, regulations (for example consumer law and labour law), and demography. Analysing actual trends and future change scenarios is intended to allow for, on the one hand, responsively adjusting VET programmes to keep VET in line with labour market qualifications needs; and on the other hand, providing the vocational guidance system with up-to-date insights.

To identify current trends, the Member States must set up monitoring and analysis tools to follow up VET leavers and

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[194] The *Qualéduc* method (in French): Guide *Qualéduc* (https://eduscol.education.fr/document/1793/download?attachme nt)

graduates, their further study, professional integration, and career course. The 2017 Recommendation on graduate tracking[195] thus called on Member States to collect the necessary statistical data from the relevant administrative databases (education, taxes, demography, social security); conduct longitudinal surveys of graduates; and – in compliance with regulations on personal data protection – anonymously link data from different sources.

The European Commission's report on the mapping of national systems for VET graduates monitoring (European Commission, 2018b) shows that in 2017, 18 Member States[196] (not to mention the United Kingdom) had in place, at national or regional level, a system for the regular monitoring of VET graduates. In other Member States, one-off actions had been observed in the past (Croatia, Poland, Romania), or projects were being prepared (Lithuania, Slovenia). Such monitoring mechanisms did not exist in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, and Latvia. In November 2018, within the framework of the *Erasmus+*-funded *On Track* project[197], these latter four Member States initiated the process of creating national systems for the regular monitoring of VET graduates.

Trend forecasting requires setting up mechanisms for the qualitative and quantitative anticipation of needs and shortage risks regarding competences and qualifications, at

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[195] Recommendation 2017/C423/01 of 20 November 2017 (CELEX:32017H1209(01))

[196] Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden.

[197] *On Track* project website (http://ontrack-project.eu/en/)

local, regional and national levels. The texts of the Copenhagen process especially call for paying due attention to the needs of small- and medium-sized enterprises. They also outline the primary responsibility of employers and social partners in identifying needs for competences and qualifications. Attention is also drawn to the need for involving a wide range of stakeholders when it comes to analysing and translating the projected trends into guidelines for training programmes and guidance: forecasters, educational institutions, public authorities in charge of VET, companies, social partners, public employment services, and local and regional authorities.

The Member States have therefore undertaken creating or improving mechanisms for the anticipation of needs for competences and qualifications. Estonia, for example, has set up the *OSKA* system[198] for the regular monitoring and forecasting of needs. Based on qualitative and quantitative surveys on needs by sector of economic activity, projections are established, and results guide the updating of professional qualification profiles, VET programmes and vocational guidance. OSKA's first sector reports were drawn up in 2016. Similar steps were taken in other Member States, especially in Finland (Cedefop, 2020k, p. 17), Greece (Cedefop, 2020*l*, pp. 20–21), Latvia (Cedefop, 2020i, pp. 20–21), Malta (Cedefop, 2020m, pp. 19–22), Slovakia (Cedefop, 2020n, pp. 24–25), and Slovenia (Cedefop, 2020j, p. 21).

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[198] The *OSKA* website (https://oska.kutsekoda.ee/en/)

The *Quality assurance in VET* series[199], published by the Secretariat of the EQAVET network, provides an overview of the VET quality assurance systems in place in each of the Member States.

7.3. Centres and platforms of vocational excellence

A centre of vocational excellence (CoVE) is a regional or national network basically composed of VET institutions, enterprises, and regional and/or national public authorities, partnering within the framework of activities combining production in innovative sectors, VET, and regional development. CoVEs simultaneously meet the interests of enterprises (which can influence the partnering VET programmes to closer address their specific qualifications needs); the interests of VET institutions (which can offer their learners training oriented towards innovative sectors, and opportunities for professional immersion and employment in the partnering enterprises); and the interests of the public players (in terms of local and regional development).

A platform of centres of vocational excellence is an international network of CoVEs that share a common interest.

Beyond their potential positive effect on the quality of VET, centres and platforms of excellence can contribute to innovation and economic growth. In 2008, the Bordeaux

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[199] Commission website – EQAVET – Virtual library
(https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1555&langId=en)

Communiqué[200] stated that "*partnerships should be encouraged between schools, players at local level and the business community*". In 2010, the Bruges Communiqué (European Commission, 2012) calls on Member States to

> *actively encourage VET providers to collaborate with innovative enterprises, design centres, the cultural sector and higher education institutions in forming "knowledge partnerships". This should help them gain valuable insight into new developments and competence needs and to develop professional excellence and innovation. Such partnerships could also be helpful in introducing experience-based learning methods, encouraging experimentation and adapting curricula.*

In 2020, the Recommendation on VET[201] set ambitious goals for the CoVEs:

> *Centres of Vocational Excellence act as catalysts for local business investment, supporting recovery, green and digital transitions, European and regional innovation and smart specialisation strategies, development of vocational education and training, including at higher qualification levels (EQF levels 5-8) in line with national context and provide innovative services such as clusters and business incubators for start-ups and technology innovation for SMEs, as well as*

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[200] Bordeaux Communiqué – 2008 (https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3972-att1-1-The_Bordeaux_Communique.pdf)

[201] Council Recommendation 2020/C417/01 of 24 November 2020 (CELEX:32020H1202(01))

innovative reskilling solutions for workers at risk of redundancy.

The Community approach builds on older national initiatives. Bringing VET and industry closer together is far from being a new idea. This was already the approach adopted in France when the first engineering schools were set up in the 18th century. In France again, more recently, the Circular of 17 December 2001[202] created the *Lycées des métiers* [*High schools for trades*]. A *Lycée des metier* is

a vocational high school *"the identity of which is built around a coherent set of trades in the same professional sector (…), and/or related trades (…), and/or complementary trades (..)",* in connection with *"enterprises (…), local authorities, in particular the Region, but also infra-regional bodies, such as inter-municipal structures, lands and agglomerations, which play an essential role at local level. (…) Enhancing relationships with enterprises and professional organisations is key for the educational effectiveness of the lycée des métiers, for the professional integration of young people and for providing enterprises with technological support that is crucial for them, so as to boost economic activity in the territory considered."*

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[202] The Lycées des métiers (in French): Circulaire N° 2001-261 du 17-12-2001 – *Bulletin Officiel du ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et du ministère de la Recherche* – N°47 du 20 décembre 2001 (https://www.education.gouv.fr/botexte/bo011220/MENE0102780C.htm)

"Technological cooperation

Based on its human resources and high-performance equipment, the lycée des métiers is a vector of innovation that can benefit surrounding businesses, in particular small and medium-sized businesses and very small businesses.

The lycée des métiers aims to be a resource centre for the surrounding local economic fabric. It can also pool its resources with those of other educational institutions – high schools, universities and their institutes and schools, engineering schools, etc. – and with economic partners in order to make up a technological platform.

The lycée des métiers is called upon to develop all forms of technological cooperation. Thus, educational activities carried out by pupils and students can lead to real technology transfers in connection with enterprises (e.g. laboratory tests, process improvement, support in the integration of new technologies and, in general, any resolution of a technical problem).

The lycée des métiers can also provide, based on agreement with enterprises, services with a view to carrying out technology transfer actions."

Still in France, the *Campus des Metiers et des Qualifications*[203] [*Trades and Qualifications Campuses*] were created in 2014. A Campus is

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[203] The Trades and Qualifications Campus (in French): Décret n° 2014-1100 du 29/09/2014 – JORF n°0227 du 01/10/ 2014 (https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT00002952491 3)

> *"a network of players partnering to develop a wide range of vocational, technological and general education and training programmes, in the scope of secondary and higher education as well as initial and continuing learning, which are focused on specific industries and on a sector of activity corresponding to a national or regional economic issue".* The network brings together *"upper secondary schools, higher education institutions, apprentice training centres, research laboratories, continuing education and training providers, enterprises and, where appropriate, sports, cultural and welfare associations."*

The *Mapping of centres of vocational excellence* report (European Commission, 2019b) illustrates the diversity of CoVEs in terms of distinctive strategic orientations, in addition to their common core business of combining production, training and regional development. In Germany, the *Bildungszentren,* which are VET institutions under the responsibility of the consular chambers, cooperate with businesses and regional authorities to carry out VET actions in response to specific local needs. The *Bildungszentren* contribute to the professional integration of young people and the technological retraining of adults. They also have networks of innovation advisers who provide services to small- and medium-sized enterprises. In Sweden, in the Västra Götaland region, the *Smarta Fabriker* network brings together schools and enterprises around industrial digitisation, in order to increase the supply of qualifications in this specialty, and to strengthen regional development. In Romania, the *Raluca Ripan* vocational school is part of a network of institutions across Europe, which aims to promote the transnational mobility of learners. In the Spanish Basque Country, the *Tknika network* covers six

specialist areas, including applied innovation in the field of VET, quality management, learning methods, internationalisation of VET, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. In Italy, the *Innovazione Apprendimento Lavoro* network places particular emphasis on lifelong learning, and offers vocational guidance, continuing education, competence development and professional retraining, and activities for local development and social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The EU VET policy encourages the development of such centres, and above all the development of platforms connecting, on a European scale, CoVEs sharing common interests, in particular for transnational VET programmes corresponding to common needs in terms of competences and qualifications. In 2019 and 2020, several projects in line with this perspective, were funded under Key Actions 2 and 3 of the *Erasmus+* Programme[204]. For the period 2021–

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[204] - 2019

  ▪ Call for proposals: Commission website – Sector Skills Alliances 2019 (https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20210124021012mp_/https:/eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/selection-results/sector-skills-alliances-2019_en)

  ▪ Selected projects (https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20210124185211mp_/https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/projects_list_ssa_2019_lot_1.pdf)

- 2020

  ▪ Call for proposals: Commission website – Centres of Vocational Excellence (https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20210119003656mp_/https:/eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/selection-results/centres-vocational-excellence_en)

  ▪ Selected projects (https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20210120094658mp_/https://eacea.ec.europa.eu

2027, Article 6 of the 2021 *Erasmus+* Regulation[205] provides for the funding of this category of projects under Key Action 2.

/sites/eacea-site/files/selection_results_including_reserve_list_-_cove_2020.pdf)
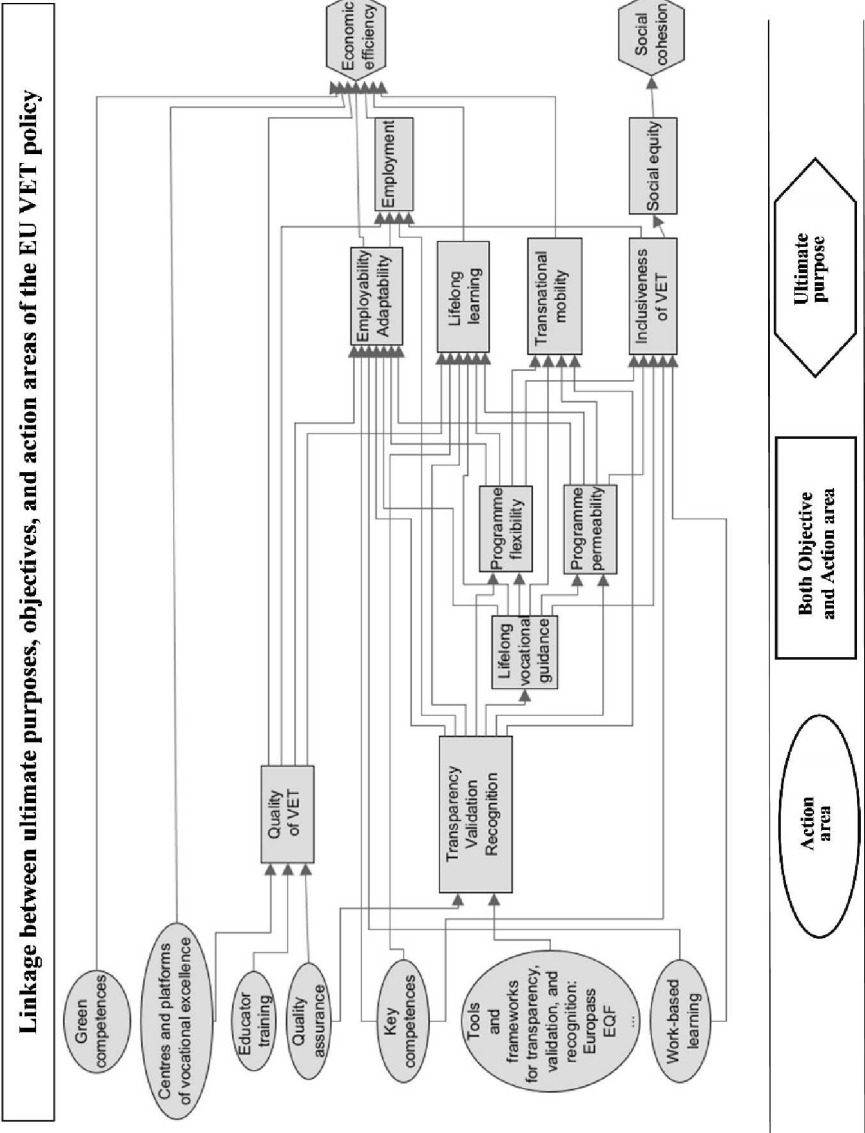
[205] Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of 20 May 2021 (CELEX:32021R0817)

CONCLUSION

*T*he EU VET policy is sixty years old. Gradually built in response to the changing needs of Member States' economies and societies, it has developed into a substantial set of actions that are now integrated into a coherent and ambitious model in the service of identified goals. The graph below illustrates this model.

To achieve these ends and objectives, the EU VET policy follows a cycle of observation and preliminary negotiations, experimentation, evaluation[206], and readjustment, with a balance between the steering by the institutional triangle, Member States right to opt out as needed, and taking on board the views of civil society stakeholders. The whole is supported by the substantial resources of the Erasmus+ programme and part of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund, endowed respectively in 2021–2027 with 24 billion Euros, 99 billion Euros, and 226 billion Euros, for all of their operations (of which VET, for sure, isn't but one of the components) (European Commission, 2020b).

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[206] By the Commission itself, though.

Linkage between ultimate purposes, objectives, and action areas of the EU VET policy

European vocational training policy can certainly still be improved. In particular, several of its themes, even though they are repeatedly invoked, still lack a clear definition (e.g., excellence) or suffer from a still modest translation into concrete achievements in the field of vocational training policy (e.g., entrepreneurship), whereas they are sometimes much more developed in other areas of EU action (e.g., innovation).

Further developments are also needed in vocational guidance, where career education, although advocated in the 2004 and 2008 Resolutions on guidance as well as in the Bruges Communiqué[207], has not been taken up in the Recommendations on key competences, education to self-management of life course and career being barely touched upon in the form of a furtive hint[208], and being certainly lacking a reference framework. In addition, the Community approach to quality assurance for vocational guidance remains to be invented.

There is also room for improvement in the field of educator training, where no significant Community initiatives have been taken. Even though the Bruges Communiqué, the Riga Conclusions, the Osnabrück Declaration, and the Recommendation of 24 November

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[207] See Section 3.3, page 63.

[208] The 2018 Recommendation on key competences just states that: "*Personal, social and learning to learn competence (…) involves knowing one's preferred learning strategies, knowing one's competence development needs and various ways to develop competences and search for the education, training and career opportunities and guidance or support available*". Council Recommendation 2018/C 189/01 of 22 May 2018 (OJ:C:2018:189:FULL)

2020 have encouraged Member States to update their educator training systems and to attract new candidates (especially from the business world), no Community system or reference framework for the training of VET educators has ever been put in place. No doubt that Member States are active in this field, but actions are scattered and unsystematic, without a common and overall direction, coordination, coherence, and dynamics.

Still, the model is being strengthened, and at least some of the weak points (especially educator training) are likely to be addressed shortly if the objectives ahead are to be achieved. In its Communication[209] to the meeting of the EU leaders[210] on 17 November 2017, the Commission proposed the establishment, by 2025, of a *European Education Area*. In its Communication of 30 September 2020[211], it proposed to pursue this objective through six dimensions: quality; inclusiveness and gender equality; green and digital transition (changing attitude, promoting sustainable education infrastructures, strengthening green and digital competences); teachers and trainers (supporting their professional development, improving their career prospects, enhancing the educational profession and its attractiveness); strengthening cooperation between higher education

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[209] Commission's Communication – Strengthening European identity through education and culture – Contribution to the Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017 (CELEX:52017DC0673)

[210] The "leaders" are the Heads of State and Government as well as the President and the Secretary General of the European Council, the President of the Commission, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

[211] Communication COM/2020/625 final (CELEX:52020DC0625)

institutions; and making cooperation in education an instrument of the European Union's *soft power* on the international geopolitical scene. For the Council of the European Union, in its Resolution of 18 February 2021[212]:

> *The European Education Area will allow learners to pursue their studies in different stages of life and to look for employment across the EU, and Member States and stakeholders to cooperate, so that high quality, innovative and inclusive education and training, supporting economic growth and high quality employment opportunities, as well as personal, social and cultural development, become the reality in all Member States and regions across the EU. — Furthermore, the European Education Area will be an area where learners and educational staff can easily cooperate and communicate across disciplines, cultures and borders, and where qualifications and learning outcomes from periods of learning abroad are automatically recognised.*

To this end, the Resolution defines five strategic priorities:

- improving quality, equity, inclusion and success for all in education and training;
- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all;
- enhancing competences and motivation in the education profession;
- reinforcing European higher education; and

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[212] Council Resolution 2021/C66/01 of 18 February 2021 (CELEX:32021G0226(01))

▪ supporting the green and digital transitions in and through education and training.

Understanding the architecture of the EU VET policy is a prerequisite for analysing the model that underlies it. But then the question is that of the relevance of this model. Are the alleged relationships (for example, the links between the quality of VET and employment, or between VET inclusiveness and social cohesion) proven, consistent with expectations, and to what extent? Do they vary depending on the Member State? And does analysis suggest amendments for the future? What can contemporary research tell us?

The analysis of the model remains to be done.

GLOSSARY

This glossary defines various terms used in this book. The definitions used do not necessarily coincide with those in use in the institutions of the European Union. For European Union definitions of VET, see Cedefop (2014). The definitions (and wording) used in this book may also depart from those in use in specific national or local contexts. Italics indicate a word defined elsewhere in the glossary.

Apprenticeship, Formal apprenticeship

Apprenticeship	A regulated *learning* mode where general and theoretical learning in school-type environment takes place in alternation with on-the-job practice.
Formal Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship structured (for example in terms of frameworks and standards for the targeted competences, for the training contents, and for assessment) with a view to achieving identified learning objectives.

Certification, Qualification

Certification	Portable attestation of acquired *learning outcomes* (or the procedure for establishing such an attestation). In the context of the European Union as well as in this book, the word

certification is generic and does not distinguish between the types of credentials, whether "degrees", "diplomas", or "certificates".

Qualification   The set of knowledge, *skills*, and possibly *complex competences*, needed to hold a role, e.g., the roles of student or *apprenticeship* supervisor, or a defined job. A qualification may or may not be certified.

Competence, Complex competence, Elementary competence

Competence   Competence can be understood in the sense of "*complex competence*" or "*elementary competence*". In this book, the word "competences" refers to both elementary and complex competences.

Complex competence   The ability to master problem situations (especially ones never ever met before) through mobilising a set of knowledge, skills (i.e., elementary competences), attitudes, schemata, values, and norms. See for example Boukhentache 2016, Haddouchane et al. 2017, Dancot 2016, Soare 2015 and 2019, Muñoz & Araya 2017, Pellaud et al. 2021, Tchibozo 2011.

Elementary competence   The ability to "*execute a predetermined series of operations in*

response to a signal or situation which is known and can be identified without difficulty or ambiguity" (Rey et al., 2006).

Synonyms: key competence, basic competence, fundamental competence, skill.

Flexibility   A *learning* programme is flexible if its participation rules accommodate learners' specific attendance constraints.

Formal Apprenticeship   See **Apprenticeship**

Formal, informal, non-formal education

Formal education   The institutional system dedicated to the methodical acquisition, by learners, of knowledge and *competences*, with a view to achieving identified *learning* objectives.

Informal education   Environments not dedicated to learning, not organised for learning, and without the intention of contributing to learning, but in which learning can occur.

Non-formal education   Environments outside the formal education system but dedicated to the methodical acquisition, by learners, of knowledge and competences, with

a view to achieving identified learning objectives.

Inclusiveness of VET

VET is inclusive if it is accessible to everyone who needs it to take their place in employment and society, and to feel involved, legitimate, recognised and accepted on an equal footing with others.

Informal education

See **Formal**

Instructor, Mentor, Teacher, Trainer, Tutor

Instructor

Agent responsible for assisting learners in their implementation of the *learning* process.

Mentor

A person who supports and advises learners on a psychological level during (part of) their learning journey and/or life course.

Teacher

Agent of the formal education system responsible for guiding and assisting learning processes.

Trainer

Agent responsible for guiding and assisting adult learning processes in *formal* or *non-formal education*.

Tutor

Person responsible for guiding and advising learners on the methodological and technical level in their training progress.

International, Transnational

International	Which touches on relations between states, or between governments, or between nations.
Transnational	Which extends beyond the borders of a Member State.

Learning   The process of acquiring knowledge and *competences*.

Learning outcomes   The knowledge, *competences*, and *qualifications* acquired through the *learning* process.

Mentor   See **Instructor**

Non-formal education   See **Formal**

Permeability   A training programme is permeable if it is accessible at different levels of its processing (and not only at its beginning) through equivalences and/or bridges from other training programmes, without a cumbersome *validation* procedure.

Qualification, Professional qualification

Qualification	See **Certification**
Professional qualification	A *qualification* needed to hold a given job.

Quality assurance   Quality assurance is the process, implemented during the production

of a product or service, which consists of applying protocols intended to guarantee that a set of measures have been taken to ensure that this product or service meet predefined expectations.

Recognition   Recognition by a hosting entity (an educational institution or a State) of a *learning* journey or a *learning outcome* achieved by a person in another entity means that the hosting entity attaches to the learning journey or learning outcome the same rights as those normally attached in the hosting entity to a similar learning journey or learning outcome achieved in that hosting entity. Recognition can apply to learning pathways, to learning journeys/experiences, and to learning outcomes, whether *formal*, *non-formal* or *informal*. Recognition can also apply to *certifications*.

Skill   See **Competence**, Elementary competence

Trainer   See **Instructor**

Transnational   See **International**

Transparency   The specification and clarification, by means of a presentation document, of the characteristics of a

learning journey and/or *learning outcomes*, in order to allow for their identification. The potentially relevant characteristics are diverse: learning subject, duration, content, learning objectives, the level of depth, the institutional context, learning conditions, learning environment, pedagogical approach, assessment methods, intended or actual educational and/or professional outcomes.

Tutor   See **Instructor**

Validation   The formal process of authorising a duly identified learning journey/experience or *learning outcome* to provide access to further *learning* or a given career opportunity.

VET, Initial VET, Continuing VET

VET   Learning or learning system aimed at making the learner operational in the exercise of a profession.

CVET   VET during working life.

IVET   VET before entering working life.

Vocational guidance   The process of helping individuals to: (a) clarify their values, interests, knowledge, *competences*, strengths, and weaknesses; (b) reflect lucidly on their background and experiences;

(c) understand the educational and professional opportunities available to them; (d) devise coherent educational and career goals as well as plans to achieve these; and (e) make decisions for plan implementation.

INDEX

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- European Council Documents
  European Parliament – European Council Summits since 1985
  https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/previous_scan.htm
- Official Journal
  EUR-Lex Portal
  https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en
- Direct links to the main Treaties of relevance to the EU VET policy
  — Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, 25 March 1957 (in Dutch, French, German, and Italian)
    CELEX:11957E/TXT
  — Maastricht Treaty (Treaty on European Union), version of 7 February 1992
    OJ:C:1992:191:FULL
  — Maastricht Treaty, consolidated version
    CELEX:12012M/TXT
  — Lisbon Treaty (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), consolidated version
    CELEX:12012E/TXT

Some of the documents relating to the Copenhagen Process as well as various reports and studies on VET in

the Member States and candidate countries are available on the websites of the Publications Office of the European Union, the Commission, the ETF and Cedefop:

- Publications Office of the European Union
  https://op.europa.eu/en/home
- European Commission
  https://ec.europa.eu/info/index_en
- ETF
  https://www.etf.europa.eu/en
- Cedefop
  https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en
- Direct links to the main proclamations of the Copenhagen Process
  - Copenhagen Declaration – 2002
    https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/copenahagen_declaration_en.pdf
  - Maastricht Communiqué – 2004
    https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/communique_maastricht_priorities_vet.pdf
  - Helsinki Communiqué – 2006
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    https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/riga-conclusions.pdf

― <u>Osnabrück Declaration</u> – 2020
https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/osnabrueck
_declaration_eu2020.pdf
- Direct link towards <u>the synthesis reports on the implementation of the Copenhagen Process</u>
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g-european-training-policy
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THE EUROPEAN UNION POLICY FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

GUY TCHIBOZO

One of the oldest in the European Union, the vocational education and training (VET) policy is rich and complex. It influences the content of VET programmes, determines the conditions for accessing VET, and shapes the rules for the acquisition, validation, certification, and international recognition of competences and qualifications. This book presents the organisation, objectives, areas of action, and main achievements of the EU VET policy. The book shows how the development of VET policies in the European Union is based on a coherent vision the design of which Union authorities, Member States, and civil society stakeholders play an active role in; and how it follows a methodical approach for the ultimate purposes of economic growth and social cohesion.

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