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# Implementing European Strategies: The European Credit-System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

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## The origin of ECVET: The Lisbon-Process

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Uncertainties of global economic development create changes in work organisation and in the division of labour as well as in the demand for skills.

The concept of Lifelong Learning - including VET - is one of the policy mechanisms for establishing a knowledge based society and for creating global competitiveness.



# The origin of ECVET: The Lisbon-Process

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## Lifelong Learning:

- Enabling the individuals in adapting their qualifications continuously to the needs of the labour markets
- Supporting the immediate transition of all individuals into the labour market.



# ECVET as one of the European instruments

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- ECVET (European Credit-Transfer System for VET)
- ECTS (European Credit and Accumulation System for HE)
- EQF
- Europass
- European Quality Charta for Mobility (EQCM)
- European Principles for the identification and validation of formal and informal learning



## The European instruments are taking shape together

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- Focussed on learning outcomes (KSC)
- Based on qualification processes
- Adapt the demands of lifelong learning and different learning contexts
- Geared to greater mobility of people



## European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training

= transparency, comparability, mutual recognition of documented learning outcomes



# What is ECVET about?

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## A **tool / a system/ an instrument**

- ✓ for **describing, comparing, assessing and recognising** learning outcomes (system and providers level)
  
- ✓ for **transferring and accumulating** learning outcomes acquired in different learning contexts (individual level)
  - non formal
  - informal
  - formal
  - abroad



# ECVET: for what purpose?

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ECVET is geared towards

- ✓ Enhancing geographical (transnational) mobility
- ✓ supporting Lifelong Learning
- ✓ Improving permeability / progression within a system





# ECVET: the underlying philosophy

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In the core:

not diplomas, certificates, didactics or learning objectives

but

## THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

*„statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do after a learning process has ended“*



# ECVET is based on „technical specifications“

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**Orientation towards learning outcomes:** qualification standards have to be described in terms of learning outcomes

**Units of learning outcomes:** The learning outcomes are bundled into units as a didactic tool in order to carry out mobility

**Procedures of assessment;** Methods of assessment have to be developed , tested and agreed upon

**Allocation of credits:** The units of learning outcomes are allocated with points

**Validation/recognition:** The partners agree upon procedures how the learning outcomes achieved abroad are recognised (transferred) in the national context.



## New times are arising....

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### Orientation towards learning outcomes means:

**No focus on input criteria of training!**

instead of that:

Definition: What are learning outcomes? How to describe them?

Designing of units of learning outcomes

Agreeing on standards for the carrying out and the assessing of learning

exploring ways of recognising learning outcomes achieved abroad



# ECVET: the mobility mechanism

**Learning context B  
(hosting institution)**



Prerequisites

LO are described

Unit of LO are designed and provided by the hosting institution, levels of difficulties are taken into account

Procedures of assessment and documentation are agreed among the partners

The units are allocated with points

MoU / Learning agreement ( quality assurance- institution)

Personal transcript /Europass (quality assurance – individual)

**Learning context A  
(sending institution)**



Transfer process

The documented and assessed LO are validated at home  
LO are recognised regarding the ongoing learning process (training programme)





# ECVET: The Challenges

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- Clearing the context: what should ECVET serve for?
- Finding a mutual understanding regarding the terminology
- Developing a suitable methodology how to work with learning outcomes, units, assessment and credits
- „keeping it simple“to enable and assure a transfer into practice



# Lessons learnt

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## Shifting from the world of education to the world of work

- That what a „learner knows, understands and is able to do after the completion of a learning process“ is easy to describe by analysing concrete work tasks

-> reference point is the world of work, not the world of education

- Curricula are often only understandable in the respecting national contexts

-> taking them as the reference point for the designing of units is sometimes more confusing than imparting .



# Lessons learnt

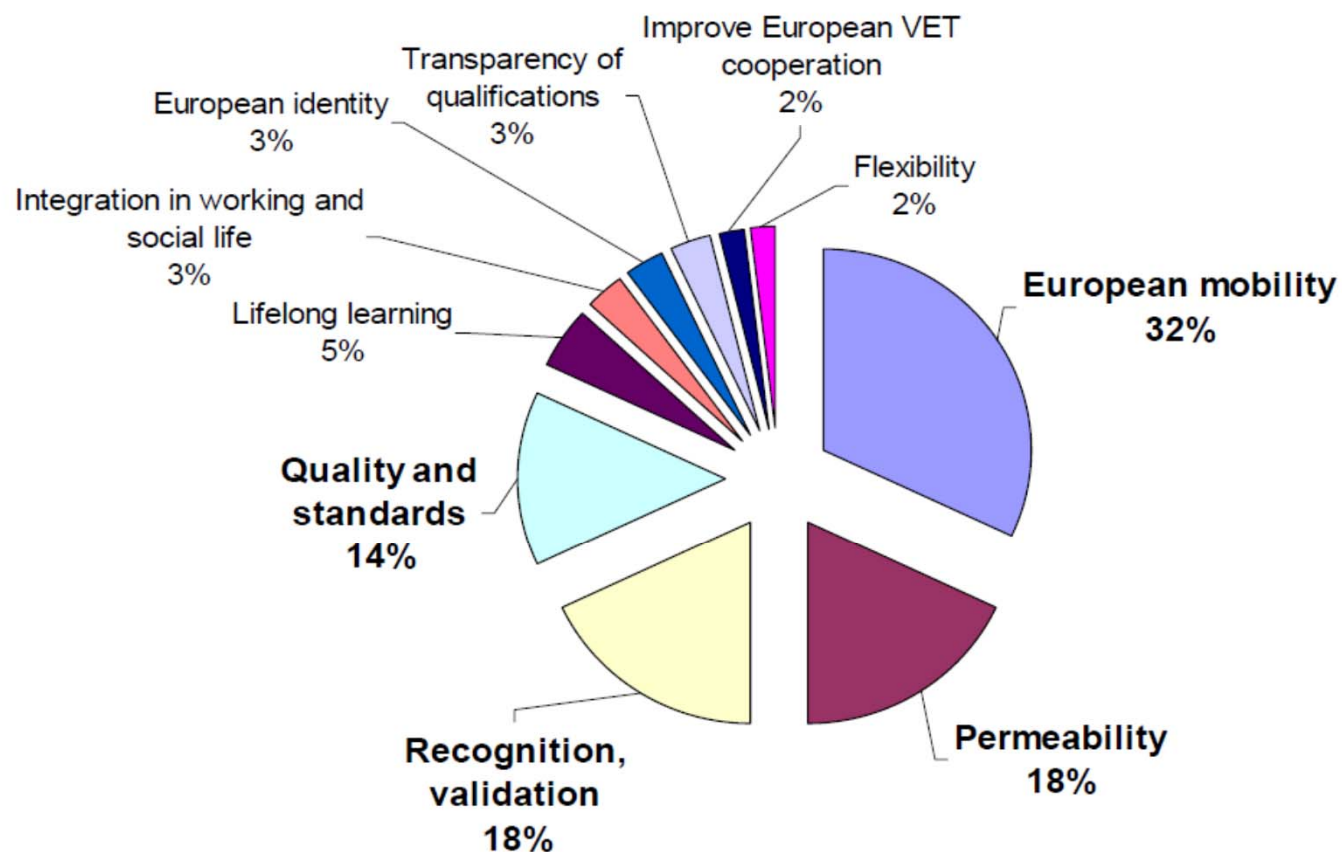
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## First and foremost ECVET is about trust!

- Transparency on learning outcomes creates trust among the partners and towards the effectiveness of other VET- systems
- The joint development and testing is the base for defining and practising common sector specific quality standards in mobility.
- The cooperation and the getting to know each other (personal, institutional, regarding the VET system) facilitates the establishing of sustainable partnerships and sectorial mobility networks .



## The reasons for implementing ECVET (2011 Monitoring, N=65)

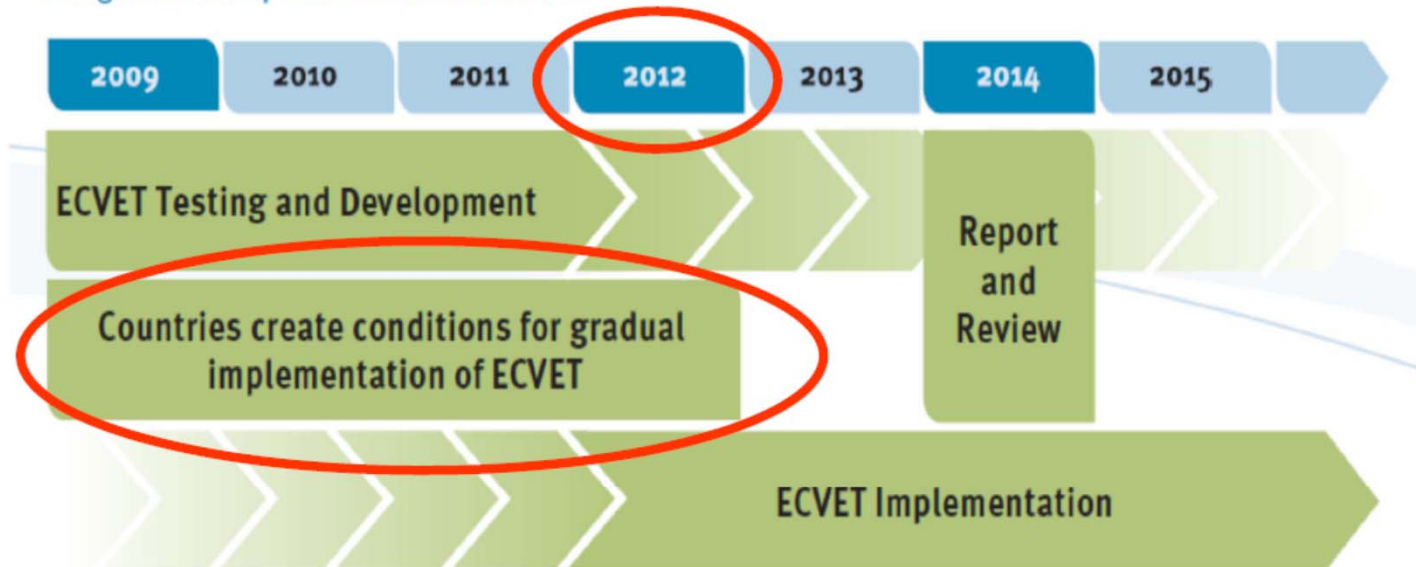






## The European timetable

### Progressive implementation of ECVET



## Main challenges to ECVET:

### Challenge Nr 1> **Convincing arguments?**

- Critical mass of arguments and proven added value
- Difficulties to transfer solutions from projects to policy-making/mainstreaming
- Trade-off between objectives and costs for implementation
- Need for a cultural shift / greater trust in validation

### Challenge Nr 2> **Competing or supporting activities?**

- Accommodating existing credit arrangements/systems with ECVET
- Development of national qualifications framework
- Development of validation

### Challenge Nr 3> **the shift to learning outcomes?**

- Writing qualifications in learning outcomes and units of learning outcomes
- Adapting assessment and recognition procedures
- Quality assurance



## Questions to be solved:

- Should / could ECVET be treated as a „system“ where all its specifications have to be implemented or could it be seen as a „tool box“?

**Thank you for your attention!**