

## **APPENDIX 4: Reports from States, Regions and Organisations.**

- 4.1 Austria
- 4.2 Belgium (Flemish Community)
- 4.3 Belgium (Francophone Community)
- 4.4 Germany
- 4.5 Denmark (*Not available in electronic form*)
- 4.6 Finland
- 4.7 Spain
- 4.8 France
- 4.9 Greece
- 4.10 Italy
- 4.11 Netherlands
- 4.12 Portugal
- 4.13 Sweden
- 4.14 United Kingdom
- 4.15 Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers
- 4.16 European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU)

## **Appendix 4.1 – Austria**

(Volker Gehmlich – Fachhochschule Osnabrück)

# **Report on a potential ECTS Extension in AUSTRIA**

## **1 Overview**

The following report is based on personal visits to institutions, to interviews with representatives of Austrian universities, to exchange of information with the Austrian Academic Exchange Office and of Austrian Ministries. It has to be added that some information in writing is still due.

Additionally all 30 Austrian universities (including Fachhochschulen) received a letter in German in which the objectives of the feasibility study were outlined. The institutions were asked to comment on the following areas:

- Could you imagine that all achievements at school, university, vocational training, continuing education would be documented by credits?
- These credits have been allocated beforehand and are based on workload. The maximum workload per year is 1,600-1,800 hours.
- Which problems, barriers do you anticipate if such a system was introduced in your area of responsibility?
- Which benefits do you expect if such a system was used European-wide?
- Please, add any personal comments within this context.

Seven universities replied. For additional information the following brochures can be recommended:

- (1) The Austrian System of Higher Education, published by the Austrian Academic Exchange Office
- (2) Study in Austria, published by the Austrian Rectors' Conference
- (3) Study in Austria, ERASMUS/SOCRATES, Non-University Sector, published by the Austrian Academic Exchange Office. This paper contains a chart of the Education system in Austria.

A direct contact with enterprises was not established. However, due to the specific organisational forms of Fachhochschulen it can be concluded that their answers have to reflect industry's perception.

## **2 Overall situation**

Major elements of the Austrian university sector are more or less identical to the German system, based et.al. on the principle of freedom of research and teaching and unity of research and teaching. Somewhat different is the sector of Fachhochschulen which, based on the experience gained in Germany, were introduced in 1993 by federal legislation. Different from Germany is that the legislation defines how Fachhochschul-programmes and Fachhochschulen as institutions are accredited. In fact, a Fachhochschulrat, a board of experts nominated by the respective Ministry decides on this matter. The institutions as such might be operated by the federal government or by other entities of public and private law. As a consequence of this Fachhochschulen are sometimes linked to Chamber of Commerce or Technology Park and run in the form of limited enterprises. This type of institutions appears to be much more open to ECTS as an accumulation

system and are also much more likely to play a significant role in integrating training in enterprises. This is underlined by the fact that no traditional university replied to the letter. ECTS does not seem to be a topic yet in universities of arts.

### **3 Perspectives**

Austrian universities had problems concerning the definition of workload. They were of the opinion that the workload is exclusively limited to the duration of a semester, i.e. in their case to 30 weeks per year. In the past months information sessions and a more intensive exchange of views has helped the situation to improve. However, there is still some reluctance. It is expected that the relatively slow start will be compensated soon. This is also partly due to the change of view in Germany but even more so to a new study-law which foresees the introduction of credits.

### **4 Viewpoints**

*ECTS in continuing education and training, part-time and distance learning programmes at institutions of higher education*

Generally speaking a development towards a fully-fledged system can be imagined. It has to be clarified which forms of education and training are referred to. A question as regards continuing education e.g. is whether ECTS is used for a continuing education programme or whether it may be used as an accumulation of individual, non-related seminars, etc. which – more or less – document the motivation to learn only.

*ECTS in all varieties of education and training at any institution (concept of LLL)*

Basically, many universities accept the general principle. Some institutions clearly state that they can imagine an ECTS-based system for academic achievements only. Some agree that the basis should be fixed but question the 60 credits of ECTS, not being able to relate them to any generally agreeable criterion.

*Barriers to apply ECTS as an accumulation system*

There were no answer stating that there were barriers which would stop them from introducing such a system. The institutions outline that they have to adapt respectively their rules and regulations of study and that a system of quality assurance has to be implemented. One institution noted that German universities limited very much the acceptance of achievements gained at Austrian establishments. This has astounded the Austrian institutions and not contributed towards a deeper form of co-operation.

*Advantages expected when ECTS is introduced as an accumulation system*

All interviewees are very positive concerning the potential of such an accumulation system. They underline the flexibility for trainees and students, see a value added in the potential for internationalisation, exchanges, transfer of knowledge and finally for harmonising and standardising programmes. Also the improvements concerning transparency, thus more opportunities for employees, are stressed. It is highlighted that they see the ECTS as a guarantee for a functioning concept of life-long-learning.

Interesting is the hint that such a system should not be limited to the European Union and that it should not enable students to minimize their efforts. This can only be interpreted in being linked to the origins of ECTS when it was assumed that students change their university every semester/year and „shop around“ in a cafeteria-style. It has become very obvious in looking at the Austrian situation that the major concern is the establishing of a „quality level“.

## **ECTS-extension Feasibility Study**

### **Report from the Flemish Task Force**

#### ***A. General Information***

The National Agency, which was requested to set up the ECTS-extension feasibility study in Flanders, decided from the beginning to conduct the study in collaboration with the four Flemish ECTS-consultants because this 'task force' had been involved in several previous ECTS-activities in Flanders. These four Flemish ECTS-consultants have a number of years of ECTS-experience in different study fields :

- Karel Van Liempt : faculty manager of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Antwerp. Is departmental ECTS co-ordinator from 1992 on and thus belongs to the inner circle. Has been ECTS-promoter for Flanders for several years and is now also acting as a counsellor for the Appraisal visits.
- Luc François : professor of contemporary history at the University of Gent. Is departmental ECTS-co-ordinator since 1989 and now also president of the Faculty Committee for internationalisation. Has been involved in a number of ECTS-promotional activities in Flanders and other countries, including in some CEE-countries.
- Hilde Lauwereys : co-ordinator of the International Relations Office of KaHo Sint-Lieven in Gent, which was one of the first *hogescholen*<sup>1</sup> in Flanders to introduce ECTS for the whole institution (for industrial sciences since 1995). Has been involved in a number of ECTS-promotional activities in Flanders and abroad.

---

<sup>1</sup> Higher education in Flanders is offered at Hogescholen and Universities.

The study programmes at the Hogescholen are divided into one-cycle and two-cycle programmes.

One-cycle higher education covers a study period of three years. The courses prepare students for specific professions in industry, commerce, agriculture, health and rehabilitation, social work, teaching, informatics, applied arts or the media. Courses are therefore practice-oriented and include several periods of work placement.

Two-cycle higher education at Hogescholen is divided into two periods of minimum two years each and covers more or less the same sectors as the one-cycle education. These studies are of academic level, i.e. based on scientific knowledge and less linked to specific professions.

The programmes include lectures as well as practical exercises, and mostly also applied research. The two-cycle graduates often start as researchers, middle managers or civil servants. Some become teachers after further studies.

At Flemish Universities studies are academic and characterised by the integration of education and research. Fundamental research is one of the Universities' competencies and is to be considered as a major goal. University graduates have the knowledge and skills to become researchers, top managers or civil servants. They can also become teachers in upper secondary education (after a supplementary diploma) or in higher education.

- Frederik De Decker : co-ordinator of the International Relations Office of KaHoG in Gent, which was one of the first *hogescholen* in Flanders to introduce ECTS for the whole institution (health care since 1995). Was, before this, also involved in the extension of ECTS at the University of Gent. Has been involved in a number of ECTS-promotional activities in Flanders and abroad.

Johan Geentjens<sup>o</sup>: head of the SOCRATES-ERASMUS NA and co-ordinator of the ECTS help lines in the Flemish part of Belgium. He is also involved in a study to reform and modernise the credit system of the HE in Flanders

This group of experts has held a number of preparatory meetings to discuss the content and methodology to conduct this Feasibility Study :

- 25 May 1999 at the KaHoG, Gent
- 15 June 1999 at the Department of Education in Brussels
- 6 July 1999 at the University of Antwerp (special session for HE-institutions)
- 19 August 1999 at the University of Antwerp
- 3 September 1999 at the Department of Education in Brussels (Round Table)
- 6 September 1999 at the University of Gent (conclusions)

As a result of the first meeting, the task force decided to involve a number of different organisations in the feasibility study, which could offer different points of view relating to the specific backgrounds of the organisations. Based on contacts from their various professional backgrounds, the consultants contacted a number of key persons in the fields of engineering, health care, justice, higher education and different other partners e.g. trade unions, employers' organisations,...

Of course, considering the limited time and budget constraints, it was impossible to involve a broad range of target groups, which led to a selection of about 20 representatives from the four 'targets groups' (respective ministries, academic science councils et al, trade unions, employers' federations) as mentioned in the papers of the Project Steering Group. In this selection we tried to include as much as possible representatives from organisations which have experience themselves in different types of education and training and of which we could therefore expect enough affinity with the topic, either directly as providers of training/education or as advisers (complete list with translation see Annex 1).

## 1. Professional organisations

- Engineers :
  - KVIV (Koninklijke Vlaamse Ingenieursvereniging) Antwerpen
  - VIK (Vlaamse Ingenieurskamer) Antwerpen
- Health Care :
  - Secretariaat van de Algemene Unie van Verpleegkundigen van België – sectie Vlaanderen – Brussel

## 2. Trade Unions

- ACV (Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond) Vormingsdienst – Brussel
- ABVV (Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond) – ACOD (Algemene Centrale Openbare Diensten) Onderwijs Vlaanderen – Gent

## 3. Employers organisation

- VEV (Vlaams Economisch Verbond) – Studiedienst – Antwerpen

## 4. Academic Councils :

- VLIR (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad)

- VLHORA (Vlaamse Hogescholenraad)
5. Ministries
- National federal
    - Ministerie van Sociale Zaken, Volksgezondheid en Leefmilieu - Brussel
    - RIZIV (Rijksinstituut voor Ziekte- en Invaliditeitsverzekering)
    - Christelijke Mutualiteit – Brussel
    - Ministry of Justice (training of Magistrats)
  - Vlaamse Gemeenschap :
    - \* Departement Onderwijs :
      - afdeling Universiteiten
      - afdeling Hogescholen
      - administratie Permanente Vorming
      - NARIC
      - SOCRATES Nationaal Agentschap
      - SOCRATES/ERASMUS Nationaal Agentschap
    - \* Departement Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur
      - afdeling Volksontwikkeling en Bibliotheekwerk
  - Leonardo da Vinci Agentschap
  - YFE Agentschap JINT vzw

In order to facilitate reporting afterwards, we decided to adopt in a limited way the 'Questionnaire' of the Project Steering Group and send this for completion to the different representatives. To allow all parties involved to give feed-back on the answers, we decided to end the study with a Round Table Conference during which –based on 5 topics relating to the questionnaire<sup>2</sup> which were presented during the conference together with a short introduction to ECTS, the Diploma Supplement and the Bologna Declaration- the answers could be fine-tuned in order to allow us to make a Summarising Report.

---

<sup>2</sup> The five points of discussion were: accrediting and certification, transparency, uniformity, equivalence and the value of credits.

## **B. Questions on the Flemish national/regional educational system**

### *Does the Flemish education system use credits?*

Soon after the introduction of ECTS in the pilot phase, the Flemish Government decided to include the use of credits in the respective legislation for the Flemish universities (1991) and *hogescholen* (1994). This means that currently in all undergraduate programmes a credit system of 60 credits per year has been implemented and is currently in full use.

### **6. Indicate how the Flemish system uses credits**

- Credit accumulation: NO
- Credit transfer: YES, in higher education
- Vocational Education: YES, in higher education
- Professional Education: YES, in higher education
- Lifelong learning: NO
- Other: none

Also see answer to question 5.

### **7. Is the Flemish credit system compatible with the existing ECTS?**

It is compatible in that respect that the same basis of 60 credits per annum has been used, with the adaptation that the minimum course unit is three credits. The credits per year represent a work-load between 1500 and 1800 hours.

### **8. What are the main barriers and difficulties associated with the development of a European credit accumulation framework from the Flemish point of view? Are there any specific legal barriers that might prevent its introduction in Flanders?**

An important legal barrier is the fact that the Decrees regulating Flemish higher education do not offer the possibility of credit accumulation. Now, a student has to pass all exams of one academic year to obtain his 60 credits. If a student does not succeed, there is however a possibility of an 'Individually Adapted Study Programme', which allows a student to transfer successfully obtained credits (maximum 40) from the previous year to the current year with a maximum accumulated total of 60 credits.

Other barriers include the fact that there is an automatic accreditation in Flemish higher education, but not for other types of education and training. It would therefore be very important that the accreditation and certification are (legally) established before a general (regional/national) accumulation system can be introduced. The current situation is as such that Flemish higher education institutions are recognised by the Decrees, publicly funded and issue recognised diploma's. They are also legally responsible to set up a quality insurance system. This is of course currently not systematically the case for other providers of education/training. Two possible solutions to close this gap were presented in the answers:

1. A system (rather than an organisation) should be set up to ensure accreditation and certification and control the quality of training/education. Three parameters should be used as the basis of this system: content, scope and level.
2. Another option is the introduction of a kind of a national or international (e.g. GATE) Accreditation Board (comparable to the UK-system of Professional Boards) which is responsible for accreditation and quality control.

The first system seemed to be most favourable according to the consulted participants.



It was striking that there was a misconception by most consulted persons about the nature of ECTS itself. It is still too often perceived as a system that *regulates* content, structure and equivalence of study programmes in stead of *facilitating* transparency and academic recognition. The concern for diversification of the content and the difficulties involved in keeping an Information Package up-to-date was a very important issue in this debate. Standardisation and quality control of IP's is perceived as being very important for the extension of the system.

Another draw-back is that ECTS, certainly in the beginning, largely drew on the experience academics had with exchanges based on 'mutual trust'. Expanding the system, will lead to collaboration between completely different providers from different systems, who perhaps were large competitors and for which defending their market was more the rule than trusting already known partners.

One of the features that has to be taken into account as well, is the type of evaluation system used to assess the performance of the student and whether or not there is such a system. This problem is even made more complex by the use of a dual (pass/fail) or diversified grading system.

### **9. Is there anything to prevent a European credit system?**

- Vocational Education                      NO
- Professional Education                    NO
- Lifelong Learning                         NO
- Part time Education                        NO
- Distance Education                         NO

### **10. Advantages**

The advantages of such a system can be found on three levels: that of the 'student', the provider-level and finally that of the employers.

The main advantage is definitely the user-friendliness for the end-user (viz. the "student"). For this "student" (can of course be undergraduate, graduate students, employees,...) it will be a lot easier to organise his life-long study career on a European (or global) market. It will also enhance the possibility for providers of education/training to position themselves on the European/global market.

For the employers, it will offer a standardised possibility to evaluate the qualification of the candidates and their employers.

### **11. Development**

The three core elements of ECTS are not questioned as such, but some features of these elements will need some adaptations.

Concerning the information package, uniformity of the information provided is necessary to enhance the readability (also for non-frequent users). The integration of quality standards can increase the efficiency of the IP. It was suggested to use a system like the ISO- or EFQM-certification, which could provide an alternative for the mutual trust.

Such a system of quality control could even be introduced to ensure the quality of the whole system, including the mutual agreements.

Elements of the Diploma Supplement (e.g. language of instruction, level,...) could supplement the IP, which would make it more readable and accessible for employers.

As concerns the credits, it should be clearly stipulated whether this only relates to student workload or whether this should be content based. Should credits also reflect a student's competence (knowledge, attitudes and skills)? It should therefore also be clarified whether work-experience in itself can lead to credits or whether it should always be related to study/training.

### **12. Agreement with principles**

Taking into account the remarks given under question 11, we could give a "YES" for an answer, for what concerns the Flemish Community.

### **13. Transparency**

Yes (also see question 10 & 11).

### **14. Other comments**

As a general feeling, it seemed astonishingly obvious to the members of the task force in their contacts with the persons consulted that all in all there is a large awareness about and interest in a possible extension and deepening of ECTS to other areas.

It is the overall opinion of the persons consulted that introducing ECTS on a broader scale will generate extra tasks for the education/training provider(s), but this is generally preferable to the present situation in which the end user has to prove his merits.

In order to be able to broaden ECTS, it is a *conditio sine qua non* that a uniform system is being used and assured.

To avoid over-focusing on the content, the suggestion was launched to introduce a kind of standardised final qualifications ("*eindtermen*") for as well higher as continuing education (comparable to the system already used in Flemish primary and secondary education).

It would be advisable to cross-check the results of this Feasibility Study with the results of the pilot phase of the EuroPass.

If the information provided in the IP should be more than a mere description, but also take into account competencies, then the quality control system becomes even more important.

### **15. Attempt for development**

Based on the opinions of the persons consulted, the Flemish task force is convinced it is timely and worthwhile to attempt to develop a European credit accumulation network. As far as the timing is concerned, we are of the opinion that taking into account the Flemish situation, in a first phase most attention should be devoted to the extension of the system to training/education outside the university system and that in a later phase accumulation should be dealt with more thoroughly.

See also the proposal of the field of health care and medicine annexed

## Annex 1

<b>Target group</b>	<b>Target area</b>	<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Translation</b>
Professional organisation	Engineers	Koninklijke Vlaamse Ingenieursvereniging (KVIV) Antwerpen	<i>Royal Flemish Civil</i>
		Vlaamse Ingenieurskamer (VIK)	<i>Industrial Engin</i>
	Health Care	Secretariaat van de Algemene Unie van Verpleegkundigen van België – sectie Vlaanderen – Brussel	<i>Secretary of the U Nursing</i>
Trade Unions		Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond – Vormingsdienst – Brussel	<i>Christian Union Tr service</i>
		Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond – Algemene Centrale Openbare Diensten – Onderwijs Vlaanderen – Gent	<i>Labour Union – Pu – Education</i>
Employers organisation		Vlaams Economisch Verbond – Studiedienst – Antwerpen	<i>Flemish Economic Federation – Rese</i>
Academic councils		Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad	<i>Flemish inter unive Council</i>
		Vlaamse Hogescholenraad	<i>Flemish Council of "Hogescholen"</i>
Ministries	National federal	Ministerie van Sociale Zaken, Volksgezondheid en Leefmilieu	<i>Ministry Social Affa Health &amp; Environm</i>
		Rijksinstituut voor Ziekte- en Invaliditeitsverzekering	<i>State Institution fo insurance</i>
		Christelijke Mutualiteit	<i>Christian Health in fund</i>
		Ministerie van Justitie – Dienst vorming Magistraten	<i>Ministry of Justice of Magistrates</i>
	Flemish Community	Departement Onderwijs afdeling Universiteiten	<i>Department Educa Section University</i>
		Departement Onderwijs afdeling Hogescholen	<i>Department Educa Section Hogescho</i>
		Departement Onderwijs administratie Permanente Vorming	<i>Department Educa Continuing Educat</i>
		Departement Onderwijs NARIC	<i>Department Educa</i>
		Departement Onderwijs SOCRATES Nationaal Agentschap	<i>Department Educa SOCRATES Nation</i>
		Departement Onderwijs SOCRATES/ERASMUS Nationaal Agentschap	<i>Department Educa SOCRATES/ERASM Agency</i>

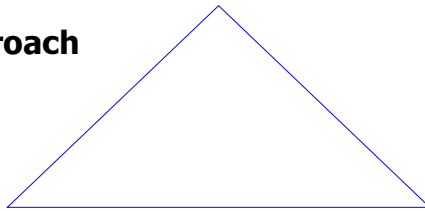
		Departement Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur - afdeling Volksontwikkeling en Bibliotheekwerk	<i>Department Welfare Health and Culture Adult Education -</i>
		Leonardo da Vinci Agentschap YFE/EVS Agentschap – JINT vzw	Leonardo da Vinci YFE/EVS Agency

# The extension of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in the European Health Care Sector

## 1. Rationale and background

In the health care area, a number of initiatives have been launched (locally) aimed at the installation of a system of accreditation of different types of (continuing) education or training initiatives of health care professionals (medical doctors, nurses, in the paramedical field,...). Since these initiatives encompass institutes of higher education and the working field, it would be a good testing ground for the extension of ECTS. This is even more so for those cases, which exist, where the accreditation is based on the accumulation of courses.

## 2. Possible project-approach



**Appendix 4.3 - Belgium Francophone Community**

(Chantal Zoller and Yves Van Haverbeke – Université Libre de Bruxelles)

**RAPPORT A LA DG XXII**

**DE LA COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTES**

**EUROPENNES**

*Possibilités d'extension d'un E.C.T.S.*  
*en Belgique francophone*

**(Chantal ZOLLER  
et Yves VAN HAVERBEKE)**

***Septembre 1999***

**Possibilités d'extension d'un E.C.T.S. en Belgique**  
**francophone**

(Chantal ZOLLER et Yves VAN HAVERBEKE)

**Table des matières**

<b><u>Partie A : A propos du rapport</u></b>	<b>page 2</b>
1. Auteurs	
2. Organisations et personnalités rencontrées	
3. Articulation du rapport	
Rapport détaillé et étayé par textes légaux (partie B et C)	
Rapport schématique par visite (partie D)	
<b><u>Partie B : Textes légaux actuels</u></b>	<b>page 4</b>
4. Organisation de l'enseignement supérieur en Communauté française	
4.1. Types d'enseignement supérieur	
4.2. Spécificités des divers types d'enseignement supérieur	
4.3. Financement des établissements d'enseignement supérieur	
5. Passerelles, crédits, unités capitalisables, équivalences internationales	
5.1. « Passerelles »	
5.2. Reports de notes	
5.3. Equivalences internationales	
<b><u>Partie C : Extension d'un E.C.T.S ?</u></b>	<b>page 13</b>
6. Entre espoir et inquiétude	
6.1. Ambiguïtés	
6.2. Déficit démocratique ?	
7. ECTS : un descriptif excellent mais limité	
8. Cohérence des parcours éducatifs	
8.1. Les crédits ne donnent aucun effet de droit à l'étudiant (sauf accord préalable)	
8.2. Les crédits ne peuvent donner d'office des droits à l'étudiant	
9. En résumé	
<b><u>Partie D - Annexe : Rapport schématique</u></b>	
D.1. Synthèse par visite	
D.2. Synthèse générale	

## **Partie A : A propos du rapport**

### **1. Auteurs**

**Chantal ZOLLER**, directrice du service des relations internationales de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, membre de l'agence nationale francophone belge Erasmus, conseiller ECTS pour la Commission Européenne (DG XXII).

**Yves VAN HAVERBEKE**, pro-recteur (ancien recteur) et professeur ordinaire à l'Université de Mons-Hainaut, membre du comité consultatif Erasmus (aujourd'hui sous-comité Socrates-Erasmus) depuis sa création en 1987, président de l'agence nationale francophone belge Erasmus, président<sup>1</sup> du conseil de l'éducation et de la formation

**Ce rapport n'engage que ses deux auteurs et en aucune façon les personnes ou les organismes cités.**

Il faut aussi prendre conscience qu'il n'est pas possible de traduire toutes les nuances de textes légaux complexes dans un résumé comme celui-ci.

A noter enfin que les élections du 13 juin 1999 ont conduit à la mi-juillet à la formation d'un nouveau Gouvernement. Le département de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique est confié à la Ministre Françoise DUPUIS, l'enseignement de promotion sociale étant sous la responsabilité du Ministre Yvan YLIEF. Les deux Ministres recevront ce rapport sous peu.

### **2. Organisations et personnalités rencontrées**

Les organisations et personnalités ci-après ont été rencontrées (par ordre alphabétique).

**Administration générale de l'enseignement et de la recherche scientifique (AGERS)** : Monsieur Gérard SCHMIT, directeur général et Madame Chantal KAUFMANN, directeur général adjoint.

**CEF (conseil de l'éducation et de la formation)** : à l'issue d'une séance de la chambre de l'enseignement à laquelle tous les membres du conseil étaient conviés, s'est tenue une réunion spéciale à laquelle des personnes concernées extérieures au conseil avaient été invitées.

**CGHE (conseil général des hautes écoles)** composé de 28 membres : 14 directeurs-présidents (il y a 30 hautes écoles, chacune étant dirigée par un directeur-président), 6 représentants du personnel des hautes écoles présentés par les organisations syndicales, 4 représentants des étudiants, 4 représentants des milieux sociaux présentés par les organisations syndicales interprofessionnelles et les organisations patronales.

**CReF (conseil des recteurs francophones)** : tous les recteurs des institutions universitaires ainsi que le secrétaire général du conseil étaient présents.

**Conseil supérieur de l'enseignement de promotion sociale** : entrevue avec son président, Monsieur Pierre VERSCHEURE.

**EUCEN (European Universities Continuing Education Network)** : entrevue avec son président, le Professeur Victor DE KOSINSKY

La direction de l'**enseignement à distance (EAD)** du ministère de la Communauté française a été consultée.

---

<sup>1</sup> Le conseil de l'éducation et de la formation se compose d'une chambre de l'enseignement (président : Y. Van Haverbeke) et d'une chambre de la formation. Le président de chacune de ces chambres assure alternativement la présidence et la vice-présidence du conseil.



Les **organisations professionnelles syndicales** n'ont pas été contactées spécifiquement mais leurs représentants ont été rencontrés à la fois au Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation et au Conseil Général des Hautes Ecoles.

### **3. Articulation du rapport**

Le rapport comprend trois parties :

1. la présentation des textes légaux et de l'organisation de l'enseignement supérieur en Communauté française de Belgique (partie B) ;
2. le rapport complet et détaillé (partie C) ;
3. le rapport synthétique reprenant les lignes de faites par visite et une synthèse générale de l'ensemble des visites / réunions / entrevues (partie D).

\*

\*       \*

## Partie B : Textes légaux actuels

### 4. Organisation de l'enseignement supérieur en Communauté française

La Constitution belge précise en son article 1 que « *La Belgique est un Etat fédéral qui se compose des communautés et des régions .* ».

Elle indique en son article 24 :

« §1<sup>er</sup>. *L'enseignement est libre ; toute mesure préventive est interdite ; ...*

...

§4. *Tous les élèves ou étudiants, parents, membres du personnel et établissements d'enseignement sont égaux devant la loi ou le décret. ...*

... »

La Constitution, en son article 127, §1<sup>er</sup>, stipule enfin que : « *Les Conseils de la Communauté française et de la Communauté flamande, chacun pour ce qui le concerne, règlent par décret (...) l'enseignement, à l'exception (...) des conditions minimales pour la délivrance des diplômes ..* ».

L'enseignement est donc de la compétence des communautés.

L'organe législatif de la Communauté française (de Belgique, en abrégé C.F.B., dénommée aussi Communauté Wallonie Bruxelles) s'appelle « Conseil de la Communauté française » (C.C.F.) ou « Parlement de la Communauté française » (résolution 131 du 16/12/1996), qui vote des décrets. Son exécutif est le Gouvernement de la Communauté française qui adopte des arrêtés du Gouvernement.

En vertu de l'article 124 précité de la Constitution, les établissements d'enseignement reconnus sont tous subventionnés par la C.F.B., qu'ils soient ou non organisés par les pouvoirs publics.

Par ailleurs, la **formation professionnelle** est principalement du ressort des organes régionaux. Elle ne fait pas l'objet du présent rapport. Comme il est possible de la considérer dans de nombreux cas comme un **service** et qu'au niveau européen les règles de la « **libre concurrence** » lui sont alors garanties, il est prudent d'éviter les amalgames afin qu'il n'y ait pas de confusion à ce sujet avec l'enseignement.

#### 4.1. Types d'enseignement supérieur

L'enseignement supérieur en C.F.B. se compose de :

- \* **l'enseignement universitaire** qui comprend deux cycles de base ;
- \* **l'enseignement supérieur hors-université**
  - de **type long** qui est de niveau universitaire et comprend deux cycles ;
  - de **type court**.

L'enseignement supérieur hors-université peut également être subdivisé en :

- hautes écoles (type long + type court) ;
- enseignement supérieur artistique (type long + type court) ;
- instituts d'architecture (type long) ;
- enseignement supérieur de promotion sociale (EPS) (principalement de type court mais aussi, bien que non organisé à ce jour, de type long) improprement qualifié d' « école de la deuxième chance ». Il délivre des titres qui correspondent à ceux du plein exercice et des titres spécifiques. C'est avant tout un opérateur de formation continue qui, dans des limites précises, tend à être considéré maintenant parfois comme un acteur de formation initiale.

Pour tenter d'être complet, il faut aussi citer :

- l'institut de formation permanente pour les classes moyennes et les petites et moyennes entreprises ;
- l'enseignement supérieur à l'armée ;
- l'enseignement à la gendarmerie ;

- l'enseignement supérieur maritime, organisé par la Communauté flamande (avec les cours en français pour les francophones).

Si on excepte l'enseignement de promotion sociale, l'enseignement supérieur est généralement de plein exercice mais il peut être dispensé en horaire décalé et/ou à temps partiel.

## **4.2. Spécificités des divers types d'enseignement supérieur**

### **4.2.1. Universités**

« Les études universitaires comprennent :

- des études conduisant à des grades académiques ;
- des études ou des activités de formation ne conduisant pas à des grades académiques et qui concernent notamment les recyclages ou la formation continue. » (décret du 5/9/94, article 4).

« Les études universitaires conduisant à des grades académiques sont organisées en trois cycles.

Les études de premier et de deuxième cycles correspondent à des études de base. ... Se rattachent aux études de premier ou de deuxième cycle, les études complémentaires<sup>2</sup> organisées en vue de compléter ou d'élargir des études de base au sein d'un même domaine ou d'un domaine différent.

...

Les études de troisième cycle comprennent :

- les études spécialisées<sup>3</sup> ;
- les études approfondies<sup>4</sup>, organisées en vue d'une formation à la recherche ;
- les études et travaux relatifs à la préparation d'une thèse de doctorat ou d'agrégation. » (décret du 5/9/94, article 5)

« L'université associe de façon étroite et nécessaire l'enseignement et la recherche. De plus elle assure divers services spécifiques à la communauté, notamment dans le cadre de contrats de recherche. Interdisciplinaire par définition, l'université a pour finalité de conserver, diffuser, et faire progresser les connaissances. Tout en préparant à certaines professions (avocat, notaire, médecin, pharmacien, médecin vétérinaire, ingénieur civil, ingénieur agronome, enseignant, ...), les études assurent une formation plus large que celle requise par la fonction exercée. » (avis n° 44 du conseil de l'éducation et de la formation, 16 mai 1997).

### **4.2.2. Hautes Ecoles**

#### **a) Enseignement supérieur de type long**

« L'enseignement supérieur de type long est de niveau universitaire. Il sanctionne des études organisées en deux cycles. Chaque cycle comprend au moins deux années d'études et au plus trois années d'études.

Les grades et les titres de l'enseignement supérieur sont de même niveau que les grades académiques correspondants.» (décret du 5/08/95, article 27, §1).

« La pédagogie de l'enseignement supérieur de type long se fonde sur l'induction et procède par étapes : expérimentation - concepts scientifiques - applications et projets.

La formation est à la fois opérationnelle et proche du concret d'une part, conceptuelle et rigoureuse, d'autre part. » (décret du 5/8/95, article 17, §2).

A l'issue du deuxième cycle, ces études de type long peuvent conduire à l'obtention d'un diplôme d'études spécialisées (D.E.S.) Ces études s'étendent sur une durée maximale de deux ans (voir décret du 5/8/95, article 19)

#### **b) Enseignement supérieur de type court**

« L'enseignement supérieur de type court est dispensé en un seul cycle comptant au moins trois années d'études et au plus quatre années d'études.

L'enseignement supérieur de type court associe sur le plan pédagogique la théorie et la pratique, les stages en milieu professionnel ou en laboratoire... » (décret du 5/8/95, article 14).

A l'issue du cycle d'études, les études supérieures de type court peuvent conduire à l'obtention d'un diplôme de spécialisation délivré au terme d'une année d'études (voir décret du 5/8/95, article 16).

### **4.2.3. Enseignement supérieur artistique**

<sup>2</sup> DEC1 et DEC2 : diplômes d'études complémentaires de premier et de deuxième cycle.

<sup>3</sup> DES : diplômes d'études spécialisées

<sup>4</sup> DEA : diplômes d'études approfondies

« L'enseignement supérieur artistique de type court comprend trois années d'études. L'enseignement artistique de type long est de niveau universitaire. Il comprend quatre ou cinq années d'études. » (décret du 27/04/99, article 2). L'enseignement de type long comprend deux cycles (2 ans + 2 ou 3 ans). A l'issue du deuxième cycle, les études supérieures de type long peuvent conduire à l'obtention d'un diplôme d'études spécialisées artistiques obtenu au terme de maximum deux années d'études.

#### 4.2.4. Instituts d'architectures

L'architecture relève de l'enseignement supérieur de type long organisé en deux cycles de respectivement 2 et 3 ans. Il est suivi d'un stage obligatoire de deux ans pour être reconnu par l'ordre des architectes.

#### 4.2.5. Enseignement supérieur de promotion sociale<sup>5</sup>

L'enseignement de promotion sociale (EPS) de régime 1 est régi par le décret du 16 avril 1991. Il remplace l'EPS de régime 2, appelé à disparaître à terme, dont il ne sera plus question ci-après.

L'enseignement supérieur de promotion sociale correspond à l'enseignement supérieur de type court et, en principe, de type long. Les diplômes délivrés soit correspondent à ceux du plein exercice, soit sont spécifiques à l'EPS.

Dans l'EPS (dorénavant sous-entendu de régime 1), les sections sont composées « d'**unités de formation** » constituées d'un cours ou d'un ensemble de cours regroupés parce qu'ils poursuivent des objectifs communs et constituent un ensemble pédagogique au niveau de l'acquisition de connaissances et/ou de savoir-faire. A chaque unité de formation correspond des capacités préalables requises. Ces **unités** sont **capitalisables**. Elles peuvent être organisées à tout moment de l'année, de jour ou en soirée.

Une attestation sanctionne la réussite de chaque unité de formation. Pour être certifié dans une section, l'étudiant doit avoir satisfait aux exigences des unités qui la composent. La certification est aussi conditionnée par la réalisation d'un travail ou d'un projet de fin d'études ou de stages.

Enfin la certification implique la **réussite d'une épreuve intégrée** devant un jury comprenant des membres extérieurs à l'établissement. Cette épreuve intégrée a pour but d'évaluer la capacité d'utiliser de manière convergente savoir, savoir-faire et savoir-être pour traiter d'un problème ressortissant de la qualification. L'épreuve intégrée représente une unité de formation d'accompagnement.

Enfin, il faut signaler qu'il est interdit de suivre simultanément des cours ayant le même contenu dans l'enseignement de plein exercice et dans l'EPS.

Pour éviter la concurrence entre l'enseignement de promotion sociale et l'enseignement supérieur de type court de plein exercice, le conseil supérieur de l'enseignement de promotion sociale et la commission de concertation ont proposé aux Ministres plusieurs mesures pour la délivrance des diplômes dans l'EPS supérieur de type court :

- garantir le niveau à l'entrée ;
- organisation en minimum 3 ans ;
- au moins 1200 périodes d'activité, stages non compris ;
- introduction des compétences transversales (et du niveau d'abstraction) dans toutes les unités constitutives (en ce compris les unités à caractère strictement technique) ;
- être âgé de minimum 24 ans pour présenter l'épreuve intégrée.

#### 4.3. Financement des établissements d'enseignement supérieur

Sans entrer dans tous les détails du financement des établissements d'enseignement supérieur, on peut donner les règles principales ci-après :

- les divers types d'enseignement supérieur disposent d'une enveloppe fixe. Par exemple, il y a une enveloppe pour les universités et une autre pour les hautes écoles ;

---

<sup>5</sup> Le texte consacré à l'enseignement de promotion sociale s'inspire largement de l'avis n°59 du conseil de l'éducation et de la formation pris en date du 8 janvier 1999.

- au sein d'une enveloppe, la répartition des subsides entre les divers établissements tient compte du nombre d'étudiants inscrits avec des coefficients donnés pour les divers domaines d'études ;
- ces subsides sont destinés aux dépenses de fonctionnement, y compris les salaires du personnel.

Pour rappel (voir point 4), en vertu de l'article 124 de la Constitution, tous les établissements reconnus, qu'ils soient publics ou privés, reçoivent leurs subsides de la Communauté française.

Il va de soi que les divers établissements peuvent avoir d'autres ressources qui sont généralement liées à des activités de recherche ou de services à la société.

## **5. Passerelles, crédits, unités capitalisables, équivalences internationales**

### **5.1. « Passerelles »**

#### **5.1.1. Au sein des universités ou des hautes écoles vers les universités**

L'accès aux études de deuxième cycle dans les universités est régi par l'article 11 du décret du 5 septembre 1994. Outre les étudiants qui ont le grade de premier cycle correspondant, ont accès à ces études de deuxième cycle

- les étudiants qui ont un autre grade académique (c'est-à-dire universitaire) de premier cycle qui ne correspondent pas à ces études mais qui y ont accès en vertu d'une décision des autorités universitaires (de l'établissement concerné) et aux conditions complémentaires qu'elles fixent.
- les étudiants porteurs d'un diplôme délivré par un établissement d'enseignement supérieur de type long ou de type court conformément aux dispositions fixées par le Gouvernement de la C.F.B. Ces dispositions sont contenues dans l'arrêté du Gouvernement du 15 mars 1999 que l'on peut résumer brièvement de la façon reprise ci-après.
- Etudiants de la catégorie 1 : réussite préalable d'une année de formation organisée par les autorités universitaires de l'institution d'accueil ;
- Etudiants de la catégorie 2 : réussite préalable d'un examen permettant la vérification des aptitudes et des connaissances requises. Le contenu de l'examen est déterminé par les autorités universitaires de l'institution d'accueil. En cas d'échec à cet examen, les étudiants peuvent se considérer comme appartenant à la catégorie 1.

**Les autorités universitaires peuvent imposer un programme complémentaire de maximum 150 heures qui fait partie intégrante des épreuves du deuxième cycle.**

- Etudiants de la catégorie 3 : accès direct au deuxième cycle mais les autorités universitaires peuvent imposer un programme complémentaire de maximum 150 heures qui fait partie intégrante des épreuves de ce cycle.

Les catégories sont énumérées dans l'arrêté du Gouvernement. La classification a été établie en fonction de la « proximité » entre les domaines d'études.

Exemple :

Pour l'accès au deuxième cycle universitaire en sciences politiques, l'étudiant est de  
catégorie 1 s'il possède un diplôme de l'enseignement supérieur de type court en droit ;  
catégorie 2 s'il possède un diplôme de premier cycle de l'enseignement supérieur de type long en sciences administratives ;  
catégorie 3 s'il possède un diplôme de deuxième cycle de l'enseignement supérieur de type long en sciences administratives.

#### **Remarque**

Le décret du 5 septembre 1994 fixe la durée minimale des études, à partir de l'année d'inscription pour l'obtention du grade, pour chacun des cycles (article 23). En considération aux études déjà effectuées avec succès, les autorités universitaires peuvent accorder certaines dispenses (article 24) et dans ce cas leur accorder une réduction de la durée minimale des études (article 25).

Les universités peuvent donc, par exemple, dispenser un étudiant ayant déjà certains acquis dans l'enseignement supérieur (universitaire ou non), d'un nombre de matières tel qu'il pourra être diplômé du premier cycle en 1 an. Dans ce cas, contrairement aux étudiants de la catégorie 1 ci-avant, il obtiendra le diplôme correspondant de 1<sup>er</sup> cycle.

- les étudiants qui ont les expériences professionnelles ou les acquis personnels et qui, au terme d'une procédure d'évaluation organisée par les autorités universitaires, justifient d'aptitudes et de connaissances suffisantes pour suivre le deuxième cycle avec succès. La détermination des études qui font l'objet de l'exception doit être approuvée au préalable par le Ministre (arrêté du Gouvernement).
- aux conditions que fixent les autorités universitaires, les étudiants porteurs d'un diplôme ou d'un certificat d'études étrangers en rapport avec les études entreprises (de 2<sup>ème</sup> cycle) (voir point 5.3 : équivalences internationales).

### **5.1.2. Au sein des hautes écoles ou des universités vers les hautes écoles**

L'article 23 du décret 5 août 1995 indique que les autorités de la haute école, conformément aux dispositions arrêtées par le Gouvernement, définissent les « passerelles ». Ces passerelles valent également pour les étudiants porteurs d'un des titres délivrés par l'enseignement de promotion sociale correspondant à ceux délivrés par l'enseignement de plein exercice. Elles valent aussi pour les étudiants issus de l'enseignement de promotion sociale aux conditions déterminées par le Gouvernement.

Un arrêté du Gouvernement du 15 mars 1999 fixe les dispositions précitées. Plusieurs cas de « passerelles » sont prévus.

1. Une année réussie à l'université (en C.F.B.) vers une deuxième année d'études d'une haute école. Ainsi, une première année réussie en médecine donne par exemple accès en deuxième année de la biologie médicale (supérieur de type court) et en deuxième année du premier cycle d'ingénieur industriel (supérieur de type long). Les autorités de la haute école peuvent imposer un complément de formation ne dépassant pas 150 heures.
2. Deux années réussies à l'université vers une deuxième année d'études d'une haute école
3. Un premier cycle réussi à l'université vers une première année d'un deuxième cycle de l'enseignement supérieur de type long. Les autorités de la haute école peuvent imposer un complément de formation ne dépassant pas 150 heures.
4. Deux années réussies dans l'enseignement supérieur de type court vers une deuxième année du premier cycle de l'enseignement de type long.
5. Titulaires d'un grade de l'enseignement supérieur de type court vers une première année du deuxième cycle de l'enseignement supérieur de type long.
6. Une première année réussie de l'enseignement supérieur de type long vers une deuxième année de l'enseignement supérieur de type court.
7. Titulaires d'un des grades de 1<sup>er</sup> cycle de l'enseignement supérieur de type long vers une deuxième année d'études de l'enseignement de type court.

Dans les cas 2, 4, 5, 6 et 7, les autorités de la haute école peuvent éventuellement imposer un programme spécifique dont le volume horaire ne peut être supérieur au volume horaire normal.

Dans tous les cas, l'arrêté du Gouvernement dresse des tableaux précis des passerelles autorisées.

*de celles-ci, les capacités acquises dans d'autres enseignements ou dans d'autres modes de formation y compris l'expérience professionnelle.*

*L'Exécutif (= le Gouvernement) détermine les modalités de reconnaissance des capacités acquises en dehors de l'enseignement de promotion sociale. »*

## **5.2. Reports de notes** (appelés localement « crédits » mais sans rapport avec les crédits ECTS)

### **5.2.1. Universités**

Le report de notes d'examens à une année académique ultérieure est régi dans les universités par l'Arrêté du Gouvernement du 17 mai 1996. Une note fait l'objet d'un report pour les trois années académiques suivantes

- si elle est au moins de 14/20 ;
- si elle est au moins de 12/20 aux conditions que l'étudiant
  - ait présenté au moins une fois tous les examens que comporte l'année d'études ;
  - ait obtenu pour l'ensemble des examens de cette année d'études une moyenne d'au moins 50% (en tenant compte d'un coefficient de pondération pour chaque cours).

Toutefois ces deux conditions ne sont pas requises lorsque l'étudiant n'a pu présenter qu'une partie des examens pour des motifs dont le bien-fondé a été reconnu par le jury (par exemple : la maladie ou l'utilisation par le jury d'un système d'unités de valeurs capitalisables).

### **5.2.2. Hautes Ecoles**

L'arrêté du Gouvernement du 2 juillet 1996, tel que modifié le 27 août 1996, stipule en son article 10 :  
*« Pour autant qu'il ait présenté l'épreuve<sup>6</sup>, sauf dispenses accordées aux examens concernant certaines activités d'enseignement ou dérogation accordée par le directeur de catégorie en cas d'empêchement légitime de présenter un examen, l'étudiant qui n'a pas réussi l'épreuve et qui recommence la même année d'études dans la même haute école est de plein droit dispensé de présenter les examens pour lesquels il a obtenu un résultat :*

1. *d'au moins 14/20 ;*
2. *d'au moins 12/20 à condition d'avoir obtenu en outre au moins 50% du total des points de l'épreuve à laquelle il a échoué.*

*Lorsque l'étudiant change de haute école ou de section, ou lorsqu'il présente des examens devant un jury d'enseignement supérieur de la Communauté française, le bénéfice de la dispense aux examens lui reste acquis dans la mesure où celle-ci concerne des matières dont les autorités de la haute école décident qu'elles sont d'importance et de nature analogues à celles qui figurent dans son nouveau programme. »*

Les règles pour le report de notes sont donc assez comparables dans les universités et les hautes écoles.

### **5.2.3. Enseignement supérieur artistique**

L'article 4 du décret du 27 avril 1999 précise que (article 4) : « ...L'enseignement peut être organisé en unités de valeur d'une durée d'un semestre pouvant s'inscrire dans le système de transfert de crédits européens (ECTS)...

...

*Les programmes tiennent compte des directives et recommandations européennes».*

Il est à nouveau question d'ECTS dans le domaine de la musique (article 16) et celui du théâtre et des arts de la parole (article 21) :

*« Les grilles-horaires sont présentées comme suit, par années d'études et par option :*

*1°) dans une première colonne, les intitulés de cours, dans une deuxième, le nombre d'heures y consacrées annuellement, dans une troisième, le nombre d'heures d'activités d'enseignement, hors heures de cours ;*

*2°) dans une quatrième colonne, le nombre d'unités de valeur pouvant s'inscrire dans le système de transfert de crédits européens (ECTS)*

---

<sup>6</sup> Par épreuve, il faut sous-entendre l'ensemble des examens de l'année d'études.

La somme des totaux des deuxième et troisième colonnes doit répondre à l'exigence de 1200 heures d'activités d'enseignement.

L'unité d'échange visée à l'alinéa 1<sup>er</sup> du 2<sup>o</sup> correspond à 25 à 30 heures d'activités d'enseignement, le total des unités d'échange de chaque année d'études s'établissant à 40. »

Il est prévu que, par dérogation, la troisième année du 2<sup>ème</sup> cycle en musique ne comprend que 800 heures et 25 unités d'échange.

Par contre, la référence à ECTS n'apparaît pas pour le domaine des arts plastiques, visuels et de l'espace et celui des arts du spectacle et techniques de diffusion et de communication.

A noter que les activités d'enseignement (voir article 4) comprennent l'ensemble des activités « à l'exception du temps consacré par l'étudiant à l'étude personnelle ».

Enfin, il est explicitement indiqué (article 6) que les écoles supérieures artistiques peuvent avec d'autres partenaires, belges ou étrangers, conclure des conventions de coopération pour l'organisation d'études relevant des domaines auxquels s'étend l'habilitation de l'un ou de l'autre partenaire.

### **5.3. Equivalences internationales**

#### **5.3.1. Universités**

Les conditions d'octroi de l'**équivalence** des **diplômes** ou **certificats** d'études **étrangers** aux grades académiques sont fixées par l'arrêté du gouvernement du 28 août 1996 :

« Le Ministre se prononce sur toute demande visant à obtenir la reconnaissance complète entre des diplômes ou certificats étrangers... .. et les grades académiques qui sanctionnent des études de base de deuxième cycle.

Les autorités universitaires reconnaissent l'équivalence complète ou partielle des diplômes ou certificats d'études étrangers aux diplômes correspondants délivrés en Communauté française, à l'exclusion de l'équivalence complète aux diplômes de base de deuxième cycle ... »

#### **5.3.2. Hautes Ecoles**

Les conditions d'octroi de l'**équivalence** des **diplômes** ou **certificats** d'études **étrangers** aux certificats et diplômes d'enseignement supérieur de type court et de type long sont fixées par l'arrêté du gouvernement du 30 septembre 1997.

« Les autorités de la haute école reconnaissent l'équivalence partielle des certificats ou diplômes d'études étrangers aux certificats et diplômes correspondants d'enseignement supérieur non universitaire, délivrés en Communauté française, lorsque la demande de reconnaissance est introduite aux fins de poursuivre des études dans une haute école.

Le Ministre se prononce sur l'équivalence partielle ... .. lorsque la demande de reconnaissance n'est pas introduite aux fins de poursuivre des études dans une haute école.

Le Ministre se prononce sur toute demande visant à obtenir la reconnaissance complète entre les diplômes et certificats d'études étrangers correspondant à des diplômes d'enseignement de type court et à des diplômes de 2<sup>ème</sup> cycle de l'enseignement supérieur de type long. »



## **Partie C : Extension d'un E.C.T.S ?**

### **6. Entre espoir et inquiétude**

Favoriser la mobilité étudiante, permettre des parcours éducatifs non formels, développer les passerelles sont des concepts aujourd'hui généralement acceptés très positivement. Il est réjouissant de pouvoir éviter les carcans anciens et actuels.

Le projet d'extension d'un ECTS provoque cependant chez nombre d'interlocuteurs un sentiment de malaise parfois assez profond. Le nouvel ECTS :

- ne va-t-il pas favoriser les parcours éducatifs incohérents ou la concurrence déloyale entre établissements ?
- ne conduira-t-il pas à une dérégulation des études inacceptable car source d'inégalités dans
  - l'accès et la poursuite des études elles-mêmes ;
  - l'accès au marché de l'emploi ?
- n'autorisera-t-il pas des manœuvres de groupes de pression en vue de faciliter la commercialisation de l'enseignement supérieur et de la formation tout au long de la vie?

**En préalable à toute discussion il faut donc réaffirmer que**

**Les pouvoirs publics doivent être les garants**  
**- des parcours éducatifs et de leur cohérence ;**  
**- de la sanction des études et donc de leur certification.**

Il est aussi important de prendre en considération la « **Déclaration de Politique Communautaire** » du nouveau Gouvernement de la Communauté française, mis en place en juillet 1999 et adoptée par le Parlement. Deux passages repris ci-dessous en sont extraits :

p1°) « *Une valorisation effective des différentes parties d'études réussies sera le premier pas vers la mise en œuvre d'un système cohérent de modules capitalisables. Dans ce cadre, le gouvernement procédera également à la validation de certaines compétences acquises notamment en dehors du milieu purement scolaire auprès d'autres opérateurs de formation.* »

2°) « *En particulier, il [le gouvernement]*

Avant de répondre à des questions sur ECTS, il importe de **définir préalablement de façon précise les termes utilisés** afin d'éviter, comme c'est le cas à l'heure actuelle, que le sens qui leur est donné dépende de l'interlocuteur.

## 6.2. Déficit démocratique ?

L'exemple de la Conférence de Bologne rend compte du malaise.

Le 18 juin 1999, de hautes personnalités des milieux de l'enseignement supérieur ont pu traiter d'importants problèmes, en ce compris l'extension d'un ECTS. Des participants ont le sentiment que les conclusions étaient connues avant le débat.

De même, il est clair pour beaucoup que lors de la réunion des Ministres de l'Education qui s'est tenue le lendemain, toute référence aux discussions de la veille n'a pu être que de pure forme.

Les auteurs de ce rapport ne peuvent manquer de se poser certaines questions - elles ont d'ailleurs été posées par des interlocuteurs - : « *Le scénario n'est-il pas déjà écrit ? N'y a-t-il pas à l'avance des réponses aux questions auxquelles on demande de réfléchir ? A l'ombre des décisions officielles, des groupes de pression agiraient-ils efficacement dans la discrétion ?* »

Justifiées ou pas, ces interrogations existent. Les occulter ne servirait qu'à leur donner du crédit et elles doivent donc être prises sérieusement en considération.

## 7. ECTS : un descriptif excellent mais limité

**L'ECTS impose de décrire assez correctement les enseignements : pré-requis, objectifs, volume horaire, charge de travail<sup>7</sup>, méthode d'enseignement, mode d'évaluation, note ECTS renvoyant à une typologie commune des performances, ...**

Il n'y a que d'évidents avantages à généraliser au maximum un tel **descriptif** pour toutes les formes d'enseignement. A ce niveau, ECTS devrait s'imposer à tous. Il faut cependant remarquer :

- l'ampleur de la tâche pour rassembler une première fois les informations (beaucoup d'établissements n'y parviennent en réalité pas) ;
- le travail considérable que représente la mise à jour d'informations sans cesse à modifier (c'est certainement le plus difficile à réaliser).

L'administration d'ECTS est complexe et coûteuse mais elle donne une certaine lisibilité aux formations suivies. Comme l'ECTS impose une codification des cours, il génère aussi des possibilités de gestion informatisée dans des établissements où cela n'était pas envisagé.

**A souligner cependant que selon cette conception, l'ECTS ne donne pas d'information (en terme de connaissances et, principalement pour les filières professionnalisantes, en termes d'aptitudes) sur :**

- **le niveau de la formation;**
- **le niveau moyen des étudiants ;**
- **les exigences du professeur.**

A titre d'exemple, des cours de statistique de 60 heures destinés à des étudiants de première année de l'enseignement supérieur de diverses filières pourraient répondre à des descriptifs assez comparables tout en ayant des niveaux et de fait des objectifs très différents.

Face à cette évidence, beaucoup **craignent** que l'ECTS se prolonge par un système de **validation des compétences**. Ne se trouve-t-on pas dans la logique des « *projets pilotes de développement de tests automatisés des compétences et des connaissances visant le développement de prototypes de validation* » ? Ne va-t-on pas, via une évaluation de la qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur que chacun souhaite, vers un *classement des établissements* ? De telles conséquences sont inadmissibles

---

<sup>7</sup> La charge réelle de travail devrait être prise en compte. Dans la réalité, ce n'est pas souvent le cas. On notera, par exemple, que dans un texte législatif de la C.F.B. faisant référence à l'ECTS (voir point 5.2.3.) le temps consacré à l'étude personnelle est exclu.

pour nombre de nos interlocuteurs. Il serait d'ailleurs très curieux qu'un système destiné en principe à favoriser la mobilité et les parcours non formels

- conduite à plus de cloisonnements ;
- favorise un enseignement standardisé et commercialisable aisément.

## 8. Cohérence des parcours éducatifs

**Tout parcours éducatif doit, pour être couronné par une certification, répondre à des critères de cohérence. La conception additionniste de l'ECTS projeté a donc ses limites. Un diplôme ne peut être le résultat d'une simple addition d'un nombre suffisant de crédits. Il est indispensable que :**

- la certification reste de la compétence exclusive des établissements reconnus par les pouvoirs publics ;
- ces établissements garantissent la cohérence des programmes d'études suivis ;
- la certification ne soit pas le résultat d'une simple addition de crédits ; elle nécessite une connaissance suffisante de l'étudiant qui doit avoir suivi un programme d'études structuré et acquis un nombre suffisant de crédits dans l'institution diplômante ;
- dans certains cas, on puisse imposer une épreuve finale intégrée.

### Pas de validation automatique des acquis et des crédits

Cette hypothèse est la seule possible dans le cadre de législation actuelle de la C.F.B. :

- en interne (d'un établissement supérieur de la C.F.B. vers un autre), les seules passerelles de plein droit sont strictement définies dans des arrêtés du Gouvernement (voir point 5.1.) ;
- pour les étudiants ayant obtenu des certificats et diplômes à l'étranger (voir point 5.3.), les équivalences internationales ne sont jamais automatiques.

Cette hypothèse de l'absence d'effets de droit, sauf accord préalable, est la seule envisageable pour le moment et la seule apparemment souhaitée par nos interlocuteurs.

Plusieurs cas peuvent alors se présenter.

1. L'établissement en amont (qui a délivré les crédits) est bien connu de l'institution en aval (dans lequel l'étudiant va poursuivre ses études en utilisant les crédits acquis en amont). Idéalement des accords bilatéraux préexistent. Cette situation est celle de l'ECTS actuel mais pourrait aussi être appliquée entre établissements de la C.F.B. ou de Belgique.
2. Les crédits sont utilisés de façon interne à l'établissement lui-même et sert à la mobilité des étudiants au sein de cette institution, par exemple en cas de changement de section. L'ECTS, dans ce cas, simplifie le contrôle et la gestion de cette mobilité interne.
3. Si l'établissement en amont n'est pas reconnu par l'institution en aval, ce dernier dispose grâce à l'ECTS d'une bonne description des crédits de l'étudiant. La procédure d'acceptation est donc facilitée mais dépend de l'établissement en aval.

L'ECTS généralisé, par l'information qu'il donnerait, permettrait de créer aisément un « **supplément au diplôme** » standardisé, descriptif détaillé très bénéfique à la lisibilité de ces diplômes et donc à la mobilité de leur détenteur.

## 9. En résumé

**1) Il est difficile d'adhérer à un principe si celui-ci n'est pas clairement défini. Actuellement l'E.C.T.S en projet reste trop imprécis. Dans la suite de ce résumé, E.C.T.S. est considéré comme un système dans lequel, pour chaque enseignement, l'établissement qui l'organise**

- précise le nombre de crédits qu'il représente, ce nombre étant fixé en fonction de la charge de travail que l'étudiant doit en principe fournir pour cet enseignement, une année totalisant 60 crédits ;
- indique les objectifs, le volume horaire et le contenu du cours, fixe les pré-requis, précise les méthodes particulières d'enseignement et d'évaluation ;

- s'engage à transposer chaque note locale d'examen en une appréciation ECTS qui renvoie à une typologie commune des performances ;

2) Les crédits obtenus en amont par un étudiant ne lui donnent aucun droit et ne sont donc pas automatiquement reconnus par l'établissement en aval, sauf s'il y a une convention préalable (ce qui est toujours le cas avec le système tel qu'il est pratiqué aujourd'hui dans le cadre de conventions bilatérales).

3) ECTS est en principe une mesure de la charge de travail mais pas nécessairement

- du niveau et du contenu précis des enseignements ;
- des connaissances et des aptitudes de l'étudiant.

Toutefois, les critères figurant au point 1 font d'ECTS une bonne « grille de lecture » pour évaluer le parcours d'études, et éventuellement de formation, d'un étudiant, pour l'examen de son dossier en vue de la reconnaissance par l'autorité compétente (selon le cas, le Ministre ou l'établissement qui l'accueille pour la suite de ses études), de l'équivalence de tout ou partie d'une ou de plusieurs années d'études antérieures. A ce niveau, la généralisation d'ECTS doit certainement être encouragée.

4) L'ECTS, tel qu'il se pratique aujourd'hui, est majoritairement transnational. S'il devenait aussi un système pratiqué de façon interne au sein de la Communauté française, il ne pourrait être assimilé à un système généralisé de passerelles. Pour rappel, les passerelles ne sont « de plein droit » que dans le respect strict de règles définies par des textes légaux ;

5) Les pouvoirs publics doivent rester les garants de la sanction et du parcours des études et, pour cela, doivent exercer leur contrôle. Il est indispensable que :

- la certification reste de la compétence exclusive des établissements reconnus par les pouvoirs publics ;
- ces établissements garantissent la cohérence des programmes d'études suivis ;
- la certification ne soit pas le résultat d'une simple addition de crédits ; elle nécessite une connaissance suffisante de l'étudiant qui doit avoir suivi un programme d'études structuré et acquis un nombre suffisant de crédits dans l'institution diplômante ;
- dans certains cas, on puisse imposer une épreuve finale intégrée.

6) La mise en place d'un tel système requiert une législation stricte pour imposer les mêmes limites et conditions d'utilisation du système à tous les établissements concernés pour éviter les dérives, les surenchères, les abus. La plupart des interlocuteurs ont souligné leur souhait de voir l'extension de l'ECTS limitée aux seuls établissements reconnus par les pouvoirs publics qui devraient en contrôler l'usage. Si cette condition n'était pas respectée, ne serait-il pas malvenu que les instances européennes en ne prévoyant pas de balises à un tel système, prennent le risque de contribuer indirectement à une valorisation des filières de formations commerciales et exemptes de tout contrôle ?

\*

\* \*

## Synthèse générale

INQUIETUDES	SOUTIEN
<p>Organes diplômants en cas de formations éclatées ?</p> <p>Contrôle du système par les pouvoirs publics et les Etats-Membres ?</p> <p>Automatisme des directives : admission de l'étudiant avec crédits <u>imposée</u> à l'institution d'accueil ?</p> <p>Label de l'université diplômante pour un parcours qu'elle n'aurait pas encadré totalement !</p> <p>Lourdeur et coût de la tâche (descriptif des cours, information, calcul des crédits)</p> <p>Difficulté de pondérer en crédits des matières atypiques (rattrapage, par ex.), des aptitudes professionnelles, des compétences techniques.</p> <p>Dérives de type cafétéria éducation, parcours totalement à la carte, fondé sur les choix de l'étudiant.</p> <p>Risque de commercialisation des filières.</p> <p>Mise en place du système sans balises communément imposées à tous les établissements, sans <i>quality control</i>.</p>	<p>ECTS = Instrument utile</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Comme outil d'analyse comparée, comme grille de lecture d'un cursus. Descriptif (Infopack ECTS) devrait être généralisé à toutes les formes d'enseignement.</li><li>2. Pour une meilleure lisibilité et reconnaissances transnationales des formations et diplômes.</li><li>3. En liaison avec le " Supplément au Diplôme " (crédits devraient y figurer)</li><li>4. Pour concrétiser la transparence des offres de formation.</li><li>5. Dans le cadre de la mobilité et de la reconnaissance académique</li><li>6. Dans un contexte d'accumulation <b>moyennant certaines limites et conditions.</b> (Voir ci-dessous)</li></ol>

## INCITANTS / ATOUTS

Actuellement : points favorables dans les textes légaux.

- Conditions et procédures d'octroi de **passerelles** entre types d'enseignements supérieurs.
  - Arrêtés du 15/03/99
  - Autorités universitaires ont la maîtrise de la reconnaissance des acquis et de l'imposition d'éventuels compléments de formation.
  - Mise à plat de l'organisation des conditions des passerelles.
- Conditions et procédures d'octroi d'**équivalences** de diplômes/certificats étrangers aux grades académiques.
  - Arrêté du 28/08/96
  - Idem pour l'enseignement supérieur hors université 30/09/97
  - Autorité compétente : Ministre ou autorités académiques ou Hautes Ecoles.
  - Prise en compte pour l'examen de la demande des conditions d'accès à la formation, de la durée, du volume horaire, du contenu de la formation, des résultats, de l'accréditation de l'institution ayant délivré le diplôme, des effets reconnus au diplôme par les autorités étrangères compétentes.
- **Reconnaissance, sous conditions, des acquis personnels ou expériences professionnelles d'étudiants n'ayant pas le grade académique requis, pour l'accès à des études de 2<sup>e</sup> cycle que les autorités universitaires déterminent (approbation du ministre nécessaire).**
  - Décret sur le régime des études universitaires et des grades académiques du 05/09/94, art. 11, § 4.
- Enseignement promotion sociale.  
**Validation des compétences acquises dans d'autres secteurs scolaires ou systèmes de formation, par exercice d'une profession et par formation personnelle.**  
**Recours à unités capitalisables avec sanction par unité de formation avec épreuve finale intégrée.**
  - Décret Enseignement promotion sociale du 16/04/91, article B.
- Enseignement supérieur artistique.  
**Référence explicite à la possibilité d'organiser l'enseignement en unités de valeur d'une durée d'un semestre pouvant s'inscrire dans le système de transferts de crédits européens.**  
**Définition d'un volume horaire minimal et maximal, avec un nombre d'heures de cours obligatoires. En musique, mention de grilles horaires présentant les unités de cours, le nombre d'heures d'enseignement, les heures de cours et le nombre d'unités de valeurs.**
  - Décret du 27/04/99.
- Déclaration de Politique Communautaire (Ministre Président Hasquin). Juillet 99.  
**“ Valorisation effective des différentes parties d'études réussies constituera le premier pas vers la mise en œuvre d'un système cohérent de modules capitalisables. Dans ce cadre, le gouvernement procédera également à la validation de certaines compétences acquises notamment en dehors du milieu purement scolaire auprès d'autres opérateurs de formation. Jeter les bases de cette éducation pour tous, entre autres par le biais de l'introduction de modules capitalisables d'une part et par la valorisation de l'ensemble de l'offre en éducation continuée d'autre part. Il veillera à adapter la validation des compétences aux besoins dans ce domaine, y compris en matière d'acquis liés à l'expérience et non formels. ”**

Pour le futur.

En cas d'extension d'un système de type ECTS

- Soutien financier
- Cadre législatif strict pour imposer conditions et limites d'utilisation précises à tous les établissements par type d'enseignement.
- Intégrations des crédits dans " Supplément au Diplôme "
- Profil de compétences, profils de métiers pour la formation
- Rendre compte : a) des niveaux de formation et de contenu, b) des aptitudes comme des connaissances.

**CONCLUSIONS / SUGGESTIONS**

**Oui à une extension du système type ECTS**

**→ Dans un système contrôlé, cohérent et structuré.**

- **Contrôlé :**
  - **Par les pouvoirs publics**
  -



# RAPPORT A LA DG XXII

## DE LA COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPENNES

### *Possibilités d'extension d'un E. .T.S. en elgique francophone*

(Chantal ZOLLER et Yves VAN HAVERBEKE)

#### PARTIE D - ANNEXE :

#### RAPPORT SCHEMATIQUE<sup>8</sup>

*Synthèse par visite  
Synthèse générale*

#### *Liste des acronymes et abréviations utilisées*

- AGERS : Administration Générale de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique
- CSC : Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens
- CEF : Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation
- CFB : Communauté Française de Belgique
- CGHE : Conseil Général des Hautes Ecoles
- CGSLB : Centrale Générale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique

---

<sup>8</sup> - Ces rapports schématiques ont pour but de circonscrire les lignes de faites des réunions et interviews. Pour une analyse en nuances et en profondeur, le lecteur est prié de s'en référer au texte complet du rapport.

- Ces rapports de synthèse ont été élaborés sur bases de notes informelles prises au cours des différentes réunions. Ils n'engagent par la responsabilité des personnes rencontrées.

- CGSP : Centrale Générale des Services Publics (Centrale professionnelle des la fonction publique de la FGTB)
- CIUF : Conseil Inter-Universitaire de la CFB
- CPEONS : Conseil des Pouvoirs organisateurs de l'Enseignement Officiel neutre Non Subventionné.
- CReF : Conseil des Recteurs Francophones
- FAPEO : Fédération des Associations de Parents de l'Enseignement Officiel
- FEF : Fédération des Etudiants Francophones
- FNRS : Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique
- SeGEC : Secrétariat Général de l'Enseignement Catholique
- UFAPEC : Union des Fédérations des Associations de Parents de l'Enseignement Catholique



# EXTENSION D'ECTS / RAPPORT DE VISITE

*Communauté française de*

*Belgique*

Activité	Interlocuteurs	Domaine	Commentaires généraux / Contexte
<p>Réunion 28 mai 99 Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation (CEF), Communauté française de Belgique, 44, Bd Léopold II, 1080 Bruxelles Tél. secrétariat : 32 2 413.26.21</p>	<p><u>Membres de la Chambre de l'Enseignement du CEF</u> <b>Mmes</b> A. Dessy (FAPEO) C. Dieu (CGSP) <b>MM.</b> L. Decallatay (UFAPE) J.P. Frère (SEGEC) L. Gewelt (Syndicat Libéral) J. Lebegge (Haute Ecole CFB) J. Lefere (CPEONS) G. De Cornet (SEGEC) R. Vandeuken (Union des Villes et Communes belges) Y. Van Haverbeke (Président) M. Carette, représentant le Ministre Ancion <b>Chargés de Mission :</b> Mmes Biron, Lietaer Mrs Bouffioux et Van Schoorisse <b>Invités :</b> Mrs D. Chasse (Président du Conseil général des Hautes Ecoles) et J. Leroy (responsable de l'enseignement supérieur de la CSC – Enseignement)</p>	<p>Organe consultatif de la CFB pour toutes les questions d'enseignement et de formation</p>	<p>Organe émettant des avis, d'initiative ou à la demande d'un ministre. Compétent pour tous les niveaux d'enseignement, et en particulier pour l'enseignement supérieur. Rassemble des experts de tous les milieux Inquiétudes par l'éducation ou la formation. Les membres sont désignés par les ministres sur proposition des instances représentées.</p>

Inquiétudes	Soutien	Incitants	Conclusions / Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lourdeur de la gestion de ECTS, qui rend difficilement envisageable son extension à certains établissements</li> <li>• Ambiguïté sur la signification et l'utilisation des crédits si l'on change de contexte (transfert aujourd'hui, accumulation demain) : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- crédits utiles pour apprécier le volume horaire d'un cursus</li> <li>- mais en dehors de l'approche bilatérale actuelle fondée sur la confiance et la bonne connaissance des programmes réciproques, aucune signification en soi ni garantie en termes de niveau ou de contenu</li> </ul> </li> <li>• adoption de techniques communes de lecture ou de pondération comme ECTS n'empêche pas la disparité (légitime, souhaitable certes) des programmes, des contenus, des niveaux. Danger de dérégulation si l'on prétend comparer "des pommes et des poires"</li> <li>• Danger de se focaliser sur la seule acquisition de compétences professionnelles : importance de préserver dans un système type ECTS une place pour une dimension éthique de la formation visant la mise en œuvre d'une éducation citoyenne.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECTS utile pour encourager la mobilité des étudiants et la concrétisation de la transparence des offres de formation</li> <li>• Moyennant balises assurant qualité et cohérence, pourrait être l'opportunité d'une révision du système d'organisation des études trop contraignant aujourd'hui (certification annuelle, définition rigide de la charge de l'enseignant, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• La définition, récente pour l'enseignement supérieur de type court, de grilles horaires minimales imposées à tous les établissements constitue un pas important pour faciliter l'intégration éventuelle d'un système de type ECTS</li> <li>• Pour le futur, mise en place d'un processus de contrôle de qualité du système, fondé sur des critères de fonctionnement et des garde-fous pour éviter les dérives</li> </ul> <p>Exemples :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• en termes de durée des formations, obligation de maîtriser les apprentissages dans un <b><u>temps imposé</u></b></li> <li>• circonscrire un programme de base obligatoire (unités de formation imposées) et un quota d'unités au choix de l'étudiant, pour garantir la <b><u>cohérence</u></b> du parcours et fixer un seuil minimal incontournable d'acquisition de connaissances fondamentales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veiller à conserver la reconnaissance d'une formation, d'un niveau par une certification émanant d'un pouvoir public. Même en cas de parcours "à la carte", nécessité de classer les acquis et les résultats selon des repères communément admis, généraux. <b><u>Une certification impliquant un pouvoir public = le meilleur garant de cette universalité</u></b></li> <li>• Etudier possibilités de mieux prendre en compte et rendre compte des <b>niveaux</b> et des <b>contenus</b> de formation, dans l'optique d'un contexte d'accumulation</li> <li>• Dans le domaine de la <b>formation</b> pour contribuer à une meilleure visibilité externe des cursus il faudrait non seulement clarifier les programmes et les contenus mais avant tout définir des <b><u>profils de métiers, des profils de compétences</u></b></li> </ul>

# EXTENSION D'ECTS / RAPPORT DE VISITE

*Communauté française de*

*Belgique*

<b>Activité</b>	<b>Interlocuteurs</b>	<b>Domaine</b>	<b>Commentaires généraux / Contexte</b>
Réunion 1 juin 1999 Conseil des Recteurs , Communauté française de Belgique, Rue d'Egmond, 5, 1000 Bruxelles Tél. secrétariat : 32 2 504.93.00	Tous les recteurs présents, à savoir : <b>J.L. Vanherweghem (Président)</b> S. Boucher (UPM) M. Crochet (UCL) C. Deroanne (FUSAGx) M. Gilbert (FUNDP) F. Jonaux <b>A. Landercy (UMH)</b> W. Legros (ULg) M. Van de Kerchove (FUSL)  Mme M. J. Simoen, Secrétaire Générale du		

Inquiétudes	Soutien	Incitants	Conclusions / Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Une année d'études = pas uniquement un volume de travail, mais aussi un certain nombre de matières et un niveau de compétences</li> <li>• Quels organes resteront diplômants ?</li> <li>• Nécessité d'un quality control ?</li> <li>• Risques de commercialisation de l'Enseignement Supérieur ?</li> <li>• Droit de refuser un étudiant malgré les crédits ECTS ?</li> <li>• Transparence ne doit pas occulter l'existence de différences entre les établissements. Philosophie de l'accumulation de crédits suppose qu'on additionne des unités capitalisables comparables</li> </ul> <p>→ si formation par addition <u>quantitative</u> de connaissances = inacceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatisation des directives</li> <li>• Glissement vers un système à l'américaine où c'est l'institution qui délivre le diplôme et pas le diplômé lui-même qui est important.</li> </ul>	<p>Lien avec “ <b>Supplément au Diplôme</b> ”, annexe descriptive et neutre qui devrait comprendre une rubrique “ crédits ”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Un cadre légal strict</li> <li>• <b>Deux décrets récents, sur les “ passerelles ” et sur l'équivalence des diplômes/certificats étrangers constituent une bonne assise légale, en vue d'une extension future de ECTS, en laissant aux universités la maîtrise du parcours et de la sanction (reconnaissance académique par l'université d'accueil, acceptation ou refus d'un étudiant, délivrance du diplôme).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintien des organes diplômants actuels</li> <li>• Reconnaissances des acquis, des équivalences par université d'accueil</li> <li>• Droit de reconnaître <u>le contenu</u> d'une formation et pas seulement le volume de travail (ne pas faire dire aux crédits plus que ce qu'ils pondèrent).</li> <li>• Nécessité d'imposer <u>l'intégralité</u> du parcours pédagogique ; parcours partiels doivent être validés par universités</li> <li>• Nécessité d'un cadre législatif strict en cas d'adoption d'un tel système pour éviter dérégulations, abus.</li> </ul>

# EXTENSION D'ECTS / RAPPORT DE VISITE

*Communauté française de*

*Belgique*

<b>Activité</b>	<b>Interlocuteurs</b>	<b>Domaine</b>	<b>Commentaires généraux / Contexte</b>
Interview 2 juin 1999 Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, Administration Générale de l'Enseignement et de la Recherche Scientifique (AGERS), Rue Royale, 204, 1000 Bruxelles Tél. : 32 2 210.55.11	M. Gérard Schmit, Directeur général  Mme Chantal Kaufman, Directeur général adjoint et responsable du NARIC	Haute Administration, Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur	M. Schmit = haut fonctionnaire en charge de tout l'enseignement supérieur et en particulier EOD.  Mme Kaufman = expert en équivalences de diplômes et membre du groupe de travail européen " Supplément au diplôme ".  → identification des textes légaux et officiels

<b>Inquiétudes</b>	<b>Soutien</b>	<b>Incitants</b>	<b>Conclusions / Suggestions</b>
--------------------	----------------	------------------	----------------------------------



Opposition à l'idée de formations éclatées

- Difficile de donner son label à un parcours que l'on n'a pas encadré
- Qui a la responsabilité de la délivrance du diplôme en cas d'abandon du découpage en années et en cycles d'études ?
- A qui revient le financement (public) dans un système où la subsidiation est liée à l'inscription (en cas de formation modulaire par exemple) ?

ECTS = instrument très utile

1. Comme grille de lecture d'un cursus
2. Dans le cadre de la mobilité et de la reconnaissance académique

- Financiers assurément, vu le coût de la mise en œuvre d'un système de transfert de crédits de qualité (aspects

Activité	Interlocuteurs	Domaine	Commentaires généraux / Contexte
<p>Réunion 10 juin 1999 Conseil Général des Hautes Ecoles (CGHE) Bruxelles, rue du Trône, 113 1050 Bruxelles tél. : (secrétariat) : +32-2-502.15.26</p>	<p>Membres du CGHE : MMES : Bousman, Dieu, Moniotte, Vanlaethem MM : Authom, Calomne, Chasse, Dupont, Dysseleer, Fagnant, Frère, Gravy, Hissette, Leroy, Michel, Otte, Perée, Rochez, Van Deuren, Van Nuffelen, Voisin Délégué du Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur : MMES Windels et Litt Commissaires du Gouvernement : MMES Charlier et De Cicco Direction générale de l'enseignement non obligatoire : M. M H Janne Secrétariat du CGHE : MMES Höfer et Noiret Chargés de Mission : MMES Majcher et Clotuche</p>	<p>Enseignement supérieur non universitaire</p>	<p>Organe officiel de concertation de l'enseignement supérieur hors universités. Emet des avis et organise des groupes de travail thématiques. Rassemble délégués des Hautes Ecoles et représentants du gouvernement et de l'administration.</p>

Inquiétudes	Soutien	Incitants	Conclusions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficultés de pondérer en crédits des aptitudes professionnelles, des compétences techniques et pas uniquement des connaissances “ scientifiques ” comme c’est le cas dans l’enseignement de type universitaire</li> <li>• Risques dans un système des crédits globalisé de mettre en péril des activités de l’enseignement supérieur qui font le lien avec l’enseignement secondaire (récupération de lacunes, de savoir-faire, de connaissances)</li> </ul> <p>Quelle place leur donner dans le calcul des crédits vu leur spécificité (organisées selon les besoins et donc non prévisibles) ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambiguïté du système actuel quant <u>aux niveaux</u> de compétences (crédits ne reflètent qu’un volume de travail)</li> <li>• Lourdeur et coût de la tâche en cas d’adoption généralisée d’ECTS</li> <li>• Danger d’aller vers un système de certification au départ de crédits !</li> <li>• Contrôle du système qui échapperait aux Etats-membres</li> <li>• Risques de dérives – mise sur même pied de filières reconnues et de filières commerciales, classement implicite des établissements – si pas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OUI à un système de crédits fondé sur un projet éducatif préétabli, sous responsabilité d’un établissement</li> <li>• OUI pour permettre une meilleure lisibilité des formations et diplômes de CFB _ bonne mesure de reconnaissance internationale</li> <li>• OUI à valorisation des compétences acquises par à-coup mais dans un système contrôlé.</li> </ul>	<p>Trois pistes favorables pour extension éventuelle d’un crédit type ECTS :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Décret sur les “ passerelles ” (1<sup>e</sup> reconnaissance formelle d’un droit de l’étudiant)</li> <li>• Enseignement de promotion sociale : prise en compte des équivalences d’heures, recours à unités de formations capitalisables avec épreuve intégrée finale</li> <li>• Système de report de notes (automatique à 14/20, sujet à condition à 12/20) constitue déjà un avantage crédité à l’étudiant d’une année à l’autre, et donc un</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pouvoirs publics doivent rester les garants de la sanction et du parcours des études</li> <li>• Limiter le système d’accumulation de crédits aux établissements reconnus, c-à-d à l’enseignement soumis à obligation de contrôle</li> <li>• Valorisation des formations par à-coups uniquement dans un système <b>cohérent</b> et <b>contrôlé</b> : → nécessité d’un projet éducatif préétabli sous responsabilité d’un établissement _ Définition de normes communes à tous les établissements fixant un minimum de cours, de matières, de stages et charges de travail minimale pour l’étudiant → Définition de normes communes à tous les établissements fixant un minimum de cours, de matières, de stages et charges de travail minimale pour l’étudiant → Affiner le système actuel (ECTS)</li> </ul>

<p>de limites précises au système et formules de contrôle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NON au système cafétéria (avec cours à la carte) fondé sur le seul choix de l'étudiant</li></ul>		<p>outil d'appréciation commun.</p>	<p>pour mieux rendre compte des <u>niveaux</u> de formation, de contenu des <u>aptitudes</u> et pas uniquement des compétences.</p>
--	--	-------------------------------------	---

# EXTENSION D'ECTS / RAPPORT DE VISITE

*Communauté française de*

*Belgique*

<b>Activité</b>	<b>Interlocuteurs</b>	<b>Domaine</b>	<b>Commentaires généraux / Contexte</b>
Interview 16 juin 1999 Conseil Supérieur de l'Enseignement de Promotion Sociale (EPS) Bruxelles	M. Pierre Verscheure, Président du Conseil de l'EPS	Organe officiel pour l'enseignement de promotion sociale	Expert pour toutes les questions liées à <b>l'éducation permanente</b>

<b>Inquiétudes</b>	<b>Soutien / Incitants</b>	<b>Conclusions / Suggestions</b>
--------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------------

	<p>EPS déjà organisé en unités de formation capitalisables, avec sanction par unité de formation et épreuve finale <u>intégrée</u>. Diplômes délivrés soit correspondent à ceux délivrés par l'enseignement de plein exercice, soit sont spécifiques à EPS.</p>	<p>Mesures à mettre en œuvre pour éviter concurrence avec enseignement de type court de plein exercice :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- garantir le <u>niveau</u> à l'entrée</li> <li>- organisation d'études de promotion sociale <u>en minimum 3 ans</u></li> <li>- au moins 1.200 périodes d'activité, stages non compris</li> <li>- introduction des compétences transversales (et du niveau d'abstraction) dans toutes les unités constitutives (en ce compris les unités à caractère strictement technique)</li> <li>- être âgé de minimum <u>24 ans</u> pour présenter l'épreuve intégrée.</li> </ul>
--	---	--

## EXTENSION D'ECTS / RAPPORT DE VISITE

*Communauté française de*

*Belgique*

<b>Activité</b>	<b>Interlocuteurs</b>	<b>Domaine</b>	<b>Commentaires généraux / Contexte</b>
<p>Interview 26 août 1999 EUCEN “ European Universities Continuing Education Network ” Université de Liège, 6, Quai Banning, 4000 Liège Tél. : +32 42 52 80 85</p>	<p>Professeur Victor De Kosinsky, Président d'EUCEN</p>	<p>Formation continue <u>universitaire</u> en Europe</p>	<p>Double expertise de V. de Kosinsky comme Professeur dans l'enseignement supérieur, université traditionnelle, et comme membre d'un réseau axé sur la formation continue au niveau européen et toutes questions inhérentes au défi du “ Life Long Learning ”</p>

Inquiétudes	Soutien	Incitants	Conclusions / Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficultés à reconnaître en formation continue les niveaux, les qualités au niveau européen. Crédits en soi ne renseignent pas davantage sur les niveaux → souhait d'un ECTS accompagné d'un système d'assurance de la qualité</li> <li>• Absence de pratique et de réflexion approfondie pour l'instant sur ce que ECTS pourrait avoir comme impact positif ou négatif en formation continue</li> <li>• Aujourd'hui prise en compte de la <u>valeur de l'établissement</u> d'origine de l'étudiant candidat en formation continue. Quels critères utiliser si Dife élargit Dile système à un contexte d'accumulation et que les partenaires ne se connaissent plus nécessairement ?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EUCEN souhaite évoluer vers adoption d'ECTS. Système peut être plus facile à adopter en formation continue dans la mesure où souvent "cours sur mesure"</li> <li>• Expérience pilote d'utilisation de crédits lancée dans un groupe de 6 universités pour former le personnel de formation continue Di: réussite Diau plan du contenu mais a échoué sur problème de financement (étudiant inscrit dans un seul établissement, mais chaque université revendique inscription)</li> </ul>	<p>Publication par EUCEN d'une étude sur le management de la formation continue universitaire en Europe avec études de cas et élaboration de recommandations / suggestions.</p> <p>Dans le chapitre consacré à la politique de formation continue universitaire, intégration de plusieurs éléments qui font partie d'ECTS (description des cours, descriptions techniques par unité de cours, etc.) avec mention explicite des crédits et diplômes offerts et recours au quality control.</p> <p>Idem publication d'un bilan de la formation continue en Europe avec un chapitre consacré au futur avec les besoins et suggestions définis par pays.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance du label universitaire, du diplôme délivré par université en formation continue. Aussi → élément attractif à utiliser dans les partenariats avec industries et formateurs privés pour garder maîtrise du système.</li> <li>• Concept du Life Long Learning impliquerait une révision de la formation initiale qui tienne compte des nouvelles données et structures en éducation continuée. Nécessité d'une approche structurée et globale de l'ensemble de la formation.</li> <li>• ECTS à associer à un système de <u>quality control</u> pour apprécier les niveaux et les qualités de formations diffusées.</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 4.4 - Germany**

(Volker Gehmlich – Fachhochschule Osnabrück)

# **GERMANY**

## **1. Overview**

### **11 Overall Situation**

#### *Using ECTS in traditional university education (undergraduate programmes)*

Although Germany never had a credit oriented system in higher education ECTS has become an essential part of university life. This is a significant shift from the attitudes prevailing about ten years ago when ECTS was launched as a European pilot scheme within ERASMUS. At that time both ministries and organisations representing universities did not regard ECTS as a useful tool. Today, about 50% of all German institutions of higher education (350) participate in the ECTS scheme of SOCRATES. In a questionnaire which was filled in by 49 universities less than 15% state that ECTS has neither been introduced nor that an introduction has been discussed at their university. However, there are not many universities yet which are using ECTS in all faculties. Also, rather the exception than the rule is the usage of ECTS as an accumulation system. For the time being ECTS is being applied as a transfer tool. This is independent of the type of university, i.e. whether it is a traditional university or one of the universities of applied sciences, and in which federal state the university is situated. It may be said, however, that the bigger the university the less ECTS has penetrated the institution yet. Not more than one university has stated that they would never introduce ECTS voluntarily, only if they were forced to do so by their ministry.

### 12 Perspectives

In most of the universities interviewed examination regulations have not been transformed to an ECTS appropriate format yet. A reason may be that at most universities initiatives of wider reforms have started, in particular the introduction of modular systems. If so, universities want to go for the new system at the same time when introducing ECTS. This is being supported by the present overall policy in higher education as it is expressed by government at federal and Länder level, by the organisations representing all universities (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz) and faculties (Fakultätentage), and by the demand from „grassroot-level“, from the students. In their own studies also the DAAD, the German Academic Exchange Organisation of universities confirms these results and perspectives (See also: Publications by the DAAD: Studienland EU; Studieren in Europa mit ERASMUS: Zehn Jahre Bildungsprogramme der Europäischen Union 1987-1997, pp 55; in preparation: ECTS-Informationen deutscher Hochschulen im INTERNET).

Overall there is a clear tendency towards introducing credits in the form of an accumulation system which by and large is oriented towards ECTS. There is a general acceptance of using the 60-credit per academic year format, taking 1,600 – 1,800 working hours per year as their basis of accumulating credits. Some universities, however, take the American or the British credit system as their model. Although universities are relatively free in changing their respective course and exam regulations only some have started to do so or included a credit based option. This is not commonly used yet.

### 13 Viewpoints



## **ECTS in continuing education and training, part-time and distance learning programmes at institutions of higher education**

### **- Universities**

The opinions expressed concerning the usage of ECTS beyond the traditional full-time undergraduate programmes are rather split. There is still a significant number of institutions which cannot imagine the usage of such a system outside their traditional fields. It is obvious that for the time being their major concern is the introduction of such a system at all. The discussion of an ECTS extension is much too early for many of them. However, there is a clear interest and most reactions are positive to the extent: „keep us in the picture“, „we are interested in the further developments“ or „inform us about the results of the feasibility study“.

*ECTS in all varieties of education and training at any institution (concept of LLL)*

Many of the interviewees state that they can imagine a system in education and training in which students acquire credits being accounted for their life-long-learning account. They also state that they would like to have such a system but most of them believe that this is nothing but a nice vision, in particular if it comprises not only different education and training (vocational) courses, programmes, institutions but also organisations of different Member States within the EU. Many see problems, in particular those of a bureaucratic kind. A surprising comment was made by the training authorities within the representatives of the German employers (Bund deutscher Arbeitgeberverbände). They believe that such a system would be much too expensive and bureaucratic and no advantages could be seen if the various certificates, degrees, etc. were comparable. This statement was made by the department responsible for apprenticeship schemes. These problems but also the opportunities will be outlined in detail in the following.

### **- Ministries, Expert bodies (Wissenschaftsrat), Organisations representing universities (HRK, DAAD)**

The official opinion of these organisations is still rather reserved concerning an extension of ECTS outside universities. However, at a personal level it is agreed that in the medium term a form of a credit system has to be launched also at other types of education and training, in particular, if the concept of life-long-learning is taken seriously. At university level it is imagined that ECTS can be extended to all programmes of different modes.

## 2. Details

### 21 Problems anticipated

#### - *levels*

The major concern which was expressed by more or less every interviewee was the need for the introduction of levels in liaison with credits. Without this link a useful system would not be possible. Trust as such is not enough and the calculation of credits on the basis of working hours does not reflect quality at all. How can credits which were achieved in continuing education be accepted as an entry requirement for university programmes, for example? Universities stress that for the time being it is even difficult to identify one level between lecturers of the same subject area within a department, highlighting that the level concept is not clear at all.

A credit acquired in vocational training can never correspond to that achieved in higher education seems to be a prevailing opinion. Universities refer to the regulations governing apprenticeship training and vocational training overall, being beyond their scope of influence.

Ministries are not necessarily of the same opinion. They may believe that the implementation of such a system is extremely difficult, in particular in Germany, taking into account the federal system and the split of authorities concerning vocational education, training and higher education and may be pessimistic as regards a fair chance of launching such a system European wide but they seem to be interested in such thoughts and like to be involved in detailed discussions as regards these ideas. They also see ECTS as an idea to be fed into a EUROPASS development.

#### - *Quality management*

Definitely the introduction of quality management and quality audits is asked for. These levels have to be monitored by „accreditation boards“. Because of identifying this need some representatives do not believe in such a system, in particular not European-wide, as they cannot imagine that generally accepted levels could be worked out and that accreditation authorities could be introduced throughout Europe without being too bureaucratic.

#### - *bilateral agreements*

It was also pointed out that there were no examination and studying regulations yet for continuing education programmes and even between the different types of German institutions of higher education problems of general acceptance of credits were expressed. At bilateral level agreements could be foreseen easiest. On the other hand an innumerable number of bilateral agreements would not be manageable at all. Also, the more diverse the programmes and institutions involved are the more time is needed to come to an agreement. Whether such a system can be effective is questionable.

In some federal states it is not even possible by law to accredit all achievements realised in another education and training system, even between the various federal states in Germany. If an introduction was imposed by government at too early a time the danger was foreseen that also within universities the present developments of introducing ECTS were endangered. It was expressed seriously that first of all the present system had to be consolidated and proven to be a workable solution before extending ECTS to other areas.

#### - *accreditation of education and training providers*

This line of argument identifies the need for a system of education and training in which also the organisations as such have to be accredited. The present system of individual government permission in the various Länder does not appear to be helpful and has to be

replaced by a general authority which accredits the institutions as such, independent of the various programmes they offer as this has to be done by other accreditation boards.

- *credit life-cycle*

Another severe setback for a system of „life-long-learning“ credits is the half-life of credits. There has to be a limit to the validity of credits within time. How long should a credit be valid and who will supervise this?

- *annual working-time*

The time in terms of working-time also plays a role when comparing the various programmes and systems. Schooling, vocational education and training, distance learning, continuing education and university education are oriented towards different time budgets throughout a year. It appears to be questionable whether an identical working time per year could be identified taking into account the already existing vast differences between the 1,600-1,800 working hours per year within ECTS and the about 900 working hours of a considerable number of British institutions.

It is expected that the annual working-time will be a reason for many discussions, in particular between students and their teachers. How can this be put on an objective basis? Can a tool be designed to supply a concept of calculation?

Additionally, interviewees stress that there is a difference in working time between teachers and students. This indicates again how many people concerned are not yet clear about the definition of the various ECTS terms. This as such is a danger on its own as there is a wide scope of misunderstanding when referring to the key essentials of the system.

- *Conversion of grades*

Converting grades is an always related issue although it has always been stressed that grades are a somewhat separate issue. German universities appear to want a general conversion table in case ECTS is being introduced. This, they underline, is of course extremely difficult when institutions of different levels and types are being involved.

- *Organisation of study-programmes and study-behaviour*

It is expected that the internal organisation of study-programmes has to be changed considerably. In the light of safeguarding that a student can finish the course in a defined period of time some difficulties are foreseen to organise the various study-programmes at a university in a way that no overlaps between programmes occur.

The introduction of a credit based system with the key element of a definition of work load will have a significant impact on student behaviour, in particular at institutions of applied sciences. Whereas in the past most study-programmes had a high number of compulsory lectures per week the student is expected to work much more independently. On the other hand also the lecturer has to learn to develop in the direction of a coach. It is believed that students and staff have to be prepared for this change extensively.

- *Bureaucracy and costs*

Some interviewees expect an increase of administrative work if ECTS was applied to all varieties of education and training. They expect that students have to wait much longer till their request for recognition of prior learning has been decided. The increase of time needed to come to agreements between various programmes and institutions lead to an increase in cost.

- *Conservatism*

The interviewees highlight that the introduction of ECTS as such and in particular the plan to extend the system beyond the university institutions means such a change that it is unlikely to be successful right at the beginning. A long, patient and step-by-step management of change is recommended taking into account the relative independence of German institutions of higher education.

## 22 Advantages expected

### - *mobility*

The interviewees quite clearly stated the need for a credit based system if the concept of life-long-learning was implemented. They would welcome a European system in which course and examination regulations were compatible. An increase of mobility of students was envisaged and such a concept of life-long-learning improved people's career planning as it increased the transparency concerning the variety of education and training programmes.

### - *reliability*

In contrast to some interviewees who see an increase in bureaucracy some expect a facilitation transferring achievements from one institution to another. In particular the security of acceptance would be enhanced considerably.

### - *options and choice*

As a consequence it can be imagined that students have a much wider choice and eventually will plan their studies according to the availability of interesting offers. This refers both to the contents of programmes and also to the mode of studying. In particular at the level of continuing education German universities seem to be lagging behind other European institutions. Part-time and distance learning programmes are not yet that much on offer as in other Member States. Thus, students' mobility between institutions of education and training, vertically and horizontally, and Member States will increase significantly. Therefore institutions of education and training will have to face much more competition, a new market of these services will develop over time.

### - *internationalisation*

There will definitely be an increase of internationalisation of programmes within the European Union first of all, and students will enhance their foreign language competencies. Even more so, their understanding of different cultures will be augmented. Having studied at different Member States will automatically make them aware of job opportunities anywhere within the European Union.

### - *modular programme design*

ECTS is an adequate tool to help modularising study-programmes and vice versa. This is a process which has just started in Germany, fostered by the federal government and the governments of the Länder allowing for the introduction of Bachelor and Master degree programmes at German universities, accepting „Meister“ certificates as qualifications for entering university programmes at advanced level or permitting graduates of „Berufsakademien“, institutions which offer programmes in a „dual system“, that is a 3-year academic sandwich programme linked to an apprenticeship, to complement their studies with a degree of universities of applied sciences within a year. In some federal states this education and training programme is equivalent to other forms of higher education. Overall, the mobility between various forms of education and training have significantly improved.

### - *finance*

There will also be consequences concerning the financing of study-programmes and students. Questions such as Bafög and study-fees will have to be discussed in the light of these developments. It is questionable whether the present practice that Bafög is not being paid to otherwise eligible students if these begin their studies in a programme in another Member State although they could study this course in Germany, too. Also, there are no general fees yet students have to pay in Germany; in other Member States they have to. Will there be a developments towards one cohesive system? Several interviewees expect so.

### ***3. Examples of Good Practice***

*University of Applied Sciences Westküste (Heide, Schleswig-Holstein)*  
*Accreditation of prior learning*

Achievements in vocational schools concerning apprenticeships of bank clerks is recognised as a part of the foundation programme in business studies. Experiences gained are encouraging.

#### **University of Kaiserslautern (Rhineland-Palatinate)**

Creation of a special board is being envisaged, similar to the ECCTIS in the UK. Information about study-programmes and their convertibility is available.

*University of Greifswald (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern)*

Publication concerning practical guidance („Vom Kopf auf die Füße – Modularisierte Bachelor- und Masterstudiengänge an der Philosophischen Fakultät der Ernst Moritz Arndt-Universität Greifswald“ – Broschüre zum Bund-Länder-Kommission-Verbundprojekt Modularisierung).

*University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück (Lower Saxony)*

A work-group is being set up made up by language teachers of a grammar school and the course directors of European Business Studies and International Business and Management. It is intended to design a scheme according to which achievements in a language (in this case French) is being accredited when entering these course-programmes.

#### **Baden-Württemberg (co-operation Ministry / universities)**

Publication of a handbook on common principles governing the introduction of a credit based system. Very much UK oriented. Not in all definitions compatible with ECTS.

**Niedersachsen (Ministry)**

Regulations are established according to which leavers of Berufsakademien and holders of „Meister“ (foreman) certificates are eligible for entering universities of applied sciences at advanced level.

## **ECTS-Project proposals**

### **1. ECTS-Creditation of school achievements in foreign languages**

#### ***Rationale***

To learn foreign languages at school has even become unpopular concerning several „major“ languages in different Member States. In particular those languages to which there is an alternative option of another subject area seem to suffer. In many federal states of Germany this is the case for French. In the UK this concerns German, but also French. It is highly likely that in other Member States similar shortcomings exist.

#### ***Objective***

Schools and universities get together to identify the learning outcomes for foreign languages. Universities will credit these achievements for their degree programmes on the basis of ECTS.

#### ***Project outline***

At local level the secondary grammar school has started the discussion how teaching contents and form may have to change to fit local universities´ needs, in this case the Fachhochschule Osnabrück. At the same time its partner school in the UK will begin similar discussions with their local college which is a partner of the Fachhochschule. Both universities run European Business Studies programmes in which foreign languages are obligatory and within which students have to spend a year abroad.

At the Fachhochschule Osnabrück a new modular language learning programme has been designed to respect much better the varying backgrounds in languages. Basically three levels of competence have been identified. A level is made up by modules which carry credits. It is envisaged that at school, levels could be achieved which correspond to the level foreseen at the university. If school graduates dispose of any of these credits the Fachhochschule will accept them so that the student can go on to the next level.

It is intended to ask partner colleges of the PRAGMA – network to set up partnerships with their local schools and join the initiative.

### **2. Co-operation of vocational schools and institutions of higher education**

#### ***Rationale***

Germany has one of the most sophisticated systems in vocational education. The „Dual System“ has been a trademark. However, this system with still

about 400 professional „training regulations“ was created in 1947 and has become outdated, at least in parts. Still, apprentices attend a vocational school one day a week without any reference to university curriculum although a considerable number of students will start a university-programme after having finished an apprenticeship. For some, the apprenticeship even is the formal qualification they need for being eligible for entering an institution of higher university.

On the other hand education and training in other Member States have developed significantly and innovations have been introduced, e.g. in the United Kingdom (NVQ) and France without having such a highly developed and costly vocational school system. In these countries it appears that education and training reacts much faster to changes in the environment. It seems that a mixture of both systems may indicate the way to prepare young people best for their future career.

### ***Objective***

To identify those elements of curricula of vocational schools which should receive credits allocated on the basis of ECTS and which would be accepted by universities.

### ***Project outline***

Within the Federal Republic of Germany vocational schools are looked after by the various state governments, identifying for example a general framework of the curriculum. At regional level respective authorities govern the schools in the region. With these organisations and with teachers of these schools the local Fachhochschule should get in touch to design an ECTS based curriculum for some courses, in particular for business studies. It can be imagined that skills acquired at vocational schools, e.g. bookkeeping, could be waived as a subject area for those students having done such courses prior to their studies. Other subject areas are imaginable as well (Quantitative Techniques, Information Technology).

Because of the internal market this should not be done within a national framework only. In particular in the UK and France the systems should be analysed to define a framework for vocational training which is credited and linked to university modules.

The Fachhochschule Osnabrück has contacted the respective regional authorities. There is a great interest on their part. In the UK and France, at partner colleges, initiatives have been taken to identify ways to „accreditation of prior learning“. Some of these projects were supported within LEONARDO DA VINCI. However, the focus has not yet been to design a programme which allocates credits and fosters an „automatic“ recognition at university level.

This could be designed as a transversal project between SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI.

### **3. Co-operation between EUROPASS and ECTS**



***Rationale***

Within LEONARDO DA VINCI progress has been made to generally accept the idea of a EUROPASS, a certificate which outlines the activities of a trainee while being on placement in another country eligible within the EU-programmes. This pass is being developed separately from any ideas of creditation within ECTS. This may hamper a further acceptance of the EUROPASS within the university environment. For the time being this pass is not very much than an idea. Thus, ECTS philosophy has to be introduced as soon as possible.

***Objective***

To design a EUROPASS on the basis of the ECTS experience and to develop an ECTS credit system for training periods included in the pass.

***Project outline***

The forthcoming start-up conference of LEONARDO DA VINCI will take place in Hanover, Germany, in December this year. In several workshops it is intended to present the ideas of linking ECTS and EUROPASS. This forum should be used to identify institutions which would run a pilot and design an ECTS based EUROPASS. This project should have as partners at least three universities from different Member States which dispose of sound national and international networks, comprising business enterprises as well.

The project should identify typical structure and contents of placements and try to work out ECTS credits for these periods which help all those involved to understand the values and the achievements of the student when being on placement.

**Appendix 4.5 - Denmark**  
(Poul bonde – Aarhus Universitet)

NOT AVAILABLE IN ELECTRONIC FORM

## **Appendix 4.6 - Finland**

(Tiina Junkkari – Helsinki Business Polytechnic)

### EXTENSION OF ECTS - FEASIBILITY STUDY IN FINLAND AND IN SWEDEN

This document is meant as a contribution to the follow up work of the steering group established by the European Commission (DGXXII) to undertake a light-touch feasibility study into the possible development of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The text is based on interviews made in Finland and Sweden and information collected from the Internet. (List of people interviewed is attached.)

The structure of this document is

1. Higher education in the target countries
  - 1.1. Higher education in Finland
  - 1.2. Higher education in Sweden
2. Crediting system used in higher education
3. ECTS in practice
  - 3.1. ECTS in use
  - 3.2. Problems met with ECTS
4. Feasibility to develop an extended credit accumulation system
  - 4.1. Definition issues
  - 4.2. Legal issues
  - 4.3. Mental issues
5. List of references

#### 1. Higher education in the target countries

##### 1.1. Higher education in Finland

"In Finland the higher education is developed as a system of two parallel sectors, the new non-university sector comprising polytechnics and the university sector. The strategies for steering higher education are based on co-ordination and application of academic, state and market regulation. Management by budget allocations and legislation will give way for management by objectives. The national framework for higher education management is set in the Government plan for the development of education and research. The setting of objectives and consultations on performance will constitute the principal channel of communication between the Ministry of Education and the institutions of higher education. Systematic evaluation is introduced in all higher education with a view to improving quality and providing bases for strategic planning.

A new advisory body, the Evaluation Council for Higher Education, was established in January 1996 to advise the Ministry of Education and to assist the higher education institutions in self-evaluation. The Council proposes initiatives regarding the institutions and their development, and promotes research on evaluation and international co-operation. The Council comprises twelve experts appointed for a four-year term. The majority of its members are teachers at higher education institutions, but students are also represented." (The Development of Education 1994-1996 National Report of Finland by the National Board of Education, September 1996, <http://www.edu.fi>.)

##### 1.1.1. Non-university sector in Finland: Polytechnics

"The formation of the non-university sector was launched in 1991 with legislation on experimental "ammattikorkeakoulut", polytechnics. The purpose of the experiment was to raise the standard of higher vocational studies and to rationalise the structure of the education system.

Favourable feedback from the experiment, the encouraging findings of international evaluations, and changes in the Finnish economic structure and labour market prompted rapid action. Parliament

approved legislation making the polytechnic system permanent in March 1995. In the beginning of August 1999 there are 31 polytechnics.

A permission to run a polytechnic is granted by the Government. A licence can be granted to a local authority, joint municipal board, or registered Finnish foundation or association. A state-run polytechnic can only be established on special grounds related to national educational needs.

The thirty-one institutions offer instruction in the fields of natural resources, technology and transport, administration and commerce, hotel and restaurant and home and institutional economics, social services and health care, culture, and recreation and sports. Five of them are specialised in only one field; all others are multidisciplinary. The largest fields of study are technology and transport, administration and commerce, and social services and health care. These together have over 80% of the students.

The degrees awarded by polytechnics are vocationally oriented higher education degrees designed to meet workplace requirements and development needs and that makes their holders eligible for various expert duties. The minimum duration of studies for a polytechnic degree is three and a half years and the maximum four and half years.

The institutions design their programmes themselves and the Ministry of Education approves them.

Eligible to apply for admission to a polytechnic are all those who have completed upper secondary education, general or vocational." (The Development of Education 1994-1996 National Report of Finland by the National Board of Education, September 1996, <http://www.edu.fi>.)

#### 1.1.2. University sector in Finland

"There are 20 universities in Finland, with a combined student population of 135,000. Ten of these institutions are traditional multidisciplinary universities and ten are specialised institutions. The latter comprise three schools of economics and business administration, three universities of technology and architecture, a university of industrial arts, an academy of fine arts, one music academy and one theatre academy. In addition, university level education is provided in one military academy, the National Defence College, under the Ministry of Defence. All universities are publicly financed state bodies enjoying autonomy in respect of their internal affairs. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the general development of the higher education system.

Each institution is governed by an Act of Parliament. The aims and scope of basic degrees and the structure of advanced degrees are defined by decree. The close connection between research and teaching is a characteristic feature of the Finnish university system. All universities provide both basic and advanced studies up to doctorate level, and are expected to engage in research. The institutions also offer continuing training, vocational courses and open university courses.

Admission to a Finnish university is allowed to a student who passes the Finnish matriculation examination. Since 1991, college and higher vocational level diplomas awarded by vocational institutions also provide the same eligibility. Also the International Baccalaureate and the Reifeprüfung confer eligibility Applicants educated abroad may be admitted if they are eligible for university studies in that country.

The universities decide upon their own entrance requirements. The selection criteria and application deadlines vary between the institutions, the fields of study, and even between the disciplines in the same field of study. Admission is based on an entrance examination or on school certificates, usually on both. Numerus clausus is in use in all fields of study. Despite the wide range of education available to matriculated students, competition for university places is increasingly fierce. Only those who are formally eligible can apply. Some 95,000 applications are received annually, and 65,000 applicants go through the selection procedure. The same person can apply for admission to several universities and several subjects, bringing the number of individual applicants' closer to 40,000. Fewer than 50% of this number gain admission to university.

The number of students admitted to the universities is determined by the institutions themselves on the

basis of a framework fixed by the Government.

The amount of time taken to complete postgraduate degrees varies greatly, even though planning work is based on the assumption that a licentiate degree would take two to three years and a doctorate about four years after completion of the basic degree. Currently, however, Finns complete their doctorates rather late by international standards, at the age of 37 on average.

The national degree regulations define the objectives, extent and overall structure of degrees. Within the framework of these regulations, each university decides on the structure and contents of its degrees in more detail. The universities also decide on their annual curricula and forms of instruction."

(The Development of Education 1994-1996 National Report of Finland by the National Board of Education, September 1996, <http://www.edu.fi>.)

### 1.1.3. Adult education in Finland connected to higher education

" Open university education is offered to the adult population, and from 1993 also for younger students, according to the degree requirements of institutions of higher education, irrespective of the basic education of the students. In open university it is possible to complete different study modules but not to take higher education degrees. After having completed around one third of a degree programme, the students have the option of entering university as regular students. The universities arrange some 50% of open university instruction, the remaining half is provided by other educational institutions, mostly by summer universities, adult education centres and folk high schools.

Summer universities, despite their name, are separate from the higher education system proper in the sense that they are run as private organisations. The 21 summer universities are active in 55 locations. Tuition at the summer universities, as their name indicates, is concentrated in the summer months, though activities in the 1980s tended more and more to extend throughout the year. The summer universities provide open university instruction in collaboration with the higher education institutions proper, and arrange continuing vocational training, foreign language courses, and various general educational and cultural events.

Continuing education centres of universities are separate departments of the universities. The main part of their financing comes from their services, for which there is a charge. The main forms of adult education are continuing education and open university education. Continuing education has been greatly expanded and directed towards internationalisation, entrepreneurship, and alleviating unemployment." (The Development of Education 1994-1996 National Report of Finland by the National Board of Education, September 1996, <http://www.edu.fi>.)

## 1.2. Higher Education in Sweden

"Since the 1993 reform of higher education, higher education institutions have had increased autonomy in organisation of studies, use of resources and general organisation. The new degree system provides greater freedom for the students to plan their own studies. Independent institutions of higher education may be recognised by the Government and after application to the National Agency for Higher Education obtains the right to award degrees and/or receive state subsidies. Diplomas from all higher education institutions recognised by the Government have equal official value.

There is no distinction between university and non-university tertiary education. There are, however, long-term programmes designed to train scientifically oriented professionals and prepare for research in the field and short-term programmes designed to train professionals capable of performing or supervising tasks with a high scientific content. There are also single-subject courses enabling the students to combine their own studies to make up degrees, mostly theoretically oriented and preparing for research in the major subject.

All institutions must obtain the right to award professional degrees.

### Admission to Undergraduate Education

Higher education in Sweden has two kinds of eligibility requirements: general and specific requirements. The general requirements are the same for all higher education and are either completed upper secondary school or adult secondary school or folk high school or 25 years of age plus 4 years of working experience

or foreign secondary school giving access to higher education in the home country + knowledge of Swedish and English corresponding to upper secondary school level. The specific requirements vary according to the field of higher education.

Competition is usually keen as there is a numerus clausus for all education. The selection of students is based on secondary school results and/or a special higher education aptitude test ("högskoleprov"). Some faculties may introduce other tests. "Högskoleprovet" (the National University Aptitude Test) is a tool for selection as an alternative to school results. It is not compulsory and not an entrance test.

Postgraduate degrees

It is possible to obtain a "licentiat"- or "doktorsexamen" in all faculties, with the faculty mentioned, e.g. "teknologie licentiatexamen". It is also possible to obtain a "filosofie doktorsexamen" (Ph.D.) at a faculty of engineering. Normally students go directly for "doktorsexamen" but it is possible first to obtain a "licentiatexamen" and then continue for the doctorate. The general requirement for admission to doctoral studies is to have a completed university degree, e.g. "kandidatexamen", "magisterexamen" or a professional degree after a long-term programme, or a foreign university degree giving access to doctoral studies in the country concerned. There are specific requirements also for postgraduate education.

All universities have the right to award "licentiat-" and "doktorsexamen". University colleges can apply for this right for a certain science area and be declared to be qualified to award these degrees for the area concerned." (Högskoleverket, National Agency for Higher Education, Marianne Hildebrand, March 1999.)

## 2. Crediting System used in Higher Education

Both in Finland and Sweden the amount of studies required for the completion of a degree (or a course) is defined in terms of credit units. Determination of a credit ("opintoviikko" in Finnish and "poäng" in Swedish) is that one credit means 40 hours work for a student including lectures and independent studies. The decision how many credit a single course consists is on the course planner.

"In Sweden the principle for translations is that degrees based on 120-140 credit points are translated as Bachelor's degrees and degrees based on 160 credit points or more as Master's degrees. Degrees from programmes shorter than 120 credit points are translated as 'University Diploma'. Certificates and degrees are awarded by the institution and need no other authorisation

The academic year in Sweden runs from the end of August to the beginning of June, 40 weeks, and consists of modular courses normally ending with an examination or paper discussed in a seminar." (Högskoleverket, National Agency for Higher Education, Marianne Hildebrand, March 1999.)

In Finland the system is more complex in practise. Also there might be a slight difference in thinking what an academic year means from learning point of view: Learning activities will happen outside the semesters as well. Meaning that although one academic year corresponds 40 credits in 1999-2000 there is 37 weeks in the semesters in polytechnics and some less in the Universities.

"All universities in Finland are maintained by the State. They enjoy a high degree of autonomy in organising teaching, research and other internal matters. At university level it falls within their autonomy to found advisory bodies. The decision-making bodies are regulated in Acts and Decrees and there is separate legislation about each university The legislation varies from university to university but there are generally

decision-making bodies at three levels: central administration, faculty (by science) and institute (by subject) levels. At each level professors, other staff, and students are represented.” (Virpi Nurmela, ECTS European Credit Transfer System, Eurooppalaisen opintosuoritusten ja arvosanojen siirtojärjestelmän soveltamisen ongelmista suomalaisissa yliopistoissa, 1999.)

This autonomy has given them right to decide independently their degree structures, time periods needed to get a degree and definition of credits This has led to notable variety in degree determination.

“Bylaws for degrees usually define their extent both in credit units and in years. One credit unit corresponds 40 hours of work for a student. For instance, "kasvatustieteiden maisteri" ( Masters degree in educational science) contains 160 credit units and the time to get it is 5 years. Based on this, you are able to define on average how many credits are required from a student. Extent of different degrees vary in credits and in years, and it does have an influence on the average amount of credits required from a student.” (Virpi Nurmela, ECTS European Credit Transfer System, Eurooppalaisen opintosuoritusten ja arvosanojen siirtojärjestelmän soveltamisen ongelmista suomalaisissa yliopistoissa, 1999.)

### 3. ECTS in practice

#### 3.1. ECTS in use

ECTS is widely used both in Finland and in Sweden. Both countries have been in charge in introduction of ECTS. Almost all the Universities and Polytechnics in Finland are using ECTS at least in one faculty or study stream. The only one missing is The Academy of Fine Arts.

Most experts who in practice have a connection to ECTS find it very useful. They only hope that all the educational institutions should use it It looks like the use of ECTS has now came onto its "brake even point": All partners are finding benefits from the system. Still there are surprisingly many institutions that never have heard about it.

In many cases ECTS has been the very first tool to – at least roughly – estimate the extent of a single course unit in a partner institution. Organisation of degrees varies greatly and sometimes it has been very difficult for people coming from ”modular based learning education” to ”educational tubes” to brake studies in parts for exchange students.

Although the Information Package was a difficult concept in many institutions at the time when the very first one was done the teachers have found it very useful later on. Structured course descriptions have helped experts in recognition of abroad studied courses.

Study agreements are not exactly used in the way they were meant to. There are several reasons for this but the main might be timing: semesters in the Northern Countries follow different time schedule compared to Central European ones. Courses organised in the following semester are not known on time when exchanges are prepared in Finland and in Sweden. Nevertheless, study agreements have proved to be

very useful for course identification purposes. Experts in the home institution are able to find right course descriptions in the Info Packages.

Transfer of credits is not 100 %. There seem not to be any attitude problems, in most cases it is just difficult to define what are the specific courses compensated. It is easier in those study streams where there are lot of optional courses. In Polytechnics the optional part is usually not enough for a whole semester which makes longer exchanges difficult. In the interviews was raised up the idea of going abroad earlier in student career: the further you study the less choices you have. All the people interviewed pointed out that each home institution is responsible for the quality of a degree and quality is a thing that they want to guarantee.

### 3.2. Problems met with ECTS

Most problems are very practical ones. Most of them are nature of "we don't know when we need the information." The second mentioned is that "How could we get those institutions who don't yet use ECTS to start to use it?"

Still there is one bigger problem in Finland raised up by CIMO in spring 1999: What is the right way to transfer Finnish study credits ("opintoviikko") to ECTS credits? CIMO organised a survey about the problems met within the university sector in Finland "ECTS European Credit Transfer System, Eurooppalainen opintosuoritusten ja arvosanojen siirtojärjestelmän soveltamisen ongelmista suomalaisissa yliopistoissa". The survey was done by Virpi Nurmela. The report of results was published in Finnish in May 1999. The following text is based on that report.

Bylaws define mostly the extend of a degree both in credits and in years. One credit means 40 hours work for a student. There are differences between degrees in the determination of the extent which means that the average amount of credits required from a student per year varies. In the report made out of the survey there are five examples to show the difficulties met in credit transfer and in definition of the total extent of a degree.

Commission guidelines tell that ECTS-credits should always be defined by the length of time defined for a degree not following the practical reality for local students. One academic year is 60 ECTS credits.

The table below shows with five examples how the coefficient varies:

Study area (~Master's)	Law, University of Lapland	English, University of Helsinki	Social studies, University of Tampere	Engineering, University of Technology	Pharmacy, University of Kuopio
Extent of the degree in Finnish credits	170	160	160	180	200
Time length defined by bylaw	5 years	5 years	5 years	5 years	5 years
Required credits per year	34	32	32	36	40
ECTS-coefficient	1,765	1,875	1,875	1,667	1,5

Autonomy of universities has meant that even the same degree might be determined differently e.g. law, Master's in Helsinki is 160, in Lapland 170 and in Turku 177



credits. This means that the corresponding ECTS-coefficients should be in Helsinki 1,875, Lappland 1,765 and Turku 1,695.

When the national framework of higher education was restructured in 1990's new lower level degree (kandidaatin tutkinto) was formed in most of the study areas. Definition at the same time meant that there is more synergy in:

Study area (~Bachelor's)	Law, University of Lappland	English, University of Helsinki	Social studies, University of Tampere	Engineering, University of Technology	Pharmacy, University of Kuopio
Extent of the degree in Finnish credits	120	120	120		120
Time length defined by bylaw	3 years	3 years	3 years		3 years
Required credits per year	40	40	40		40
ECTS-coefficient	1,5	1,5	1,5		1,5

Because these "kandidaatin tutkinnot", degrees are intermediate degrees it leads to discrepancy:

Study area (from ~Bachelor's to ~Master's)	Law, University of Lappland	English, University of Helsinki	Social studies, University of Tampere	Engineering, University of Technology	Pharmacy, University of Kuopio
Credits from the lower degree to the upper	50	40	40		80
Time length defined by bylaw	2 years	2 years	2 years		2 years
Required credits per year	25	20	20		40
ECTS-coefficient	2,4	3	3		1,5

How different universities have faced this problem varies. There are universities using the suggested 1,5 for all study areas and there are universities using "the real ones" as expressed on the first table.

Also in Sweden there are some discussions going on about the fact that ECTS is only a relative measure corresponding the length of an academic year in different countries.

#### 4. Feasibility to develop an extended credit accumulation system

##### 4.1. Definition issues

Problems met with the definition of ECTS credit, should be solved before going further.

Bertil Holmberg, ECTS Counsellor, Sweden who gave the idea to find an absolute measure instead of this relative one, promised to write a separate document on this.

## 4.2. Legal issues

Neither in Finland nor in Sweden are legal barriers for developing ECTS as a European credit system to facilitate education, vocational training and professional development. On the contrary, in Sweden there are in the bylaw for higher education paragraphs about recognition of a course, where even more is allowed than is in use in practice.

”Tillgoräknande av kurs

12 § Om en student vid en högskola inom landet har gått igenom viss grundläggande höskoleutbildning med godkänt resultat, har studenten rätt att tillgodoräkna sig detta för motsvarande utbildning vid någon annan högskola. Detsamma gäller studenter, som vid universitet eller motsvarande läroanstalt i Danmark, Finland, Island eller Norge har fått igenom viss utbildning med godkänt resultat.

13 § Student har rätt att tillgodoräkna sig annan utbildning än den som avses i 12 §, om de kunskaper och färdigheter som studenten åberupar är av en sådan beskaffenhet och har en sådan omfattning att de i huvudsak svarar mot den utbildning för vilken de är avsedda att tillgodoräknas. Student får även tillgodoräknas motsvarande kunskaper och färdigheter som har förvärvats i yrkesverksamhet.” (Högskoleförordningen 6 kap. Grundläggande höskoleutbildning, 12 §, 13 §.)

The latter even allows to use skills and knowledge earned at work as part of studies if they are ”valid for the objectives of the degree”.

## 4.3. Mental issues

Education and knowledge is much more than accumulation of credits. All knowledge and skills should always be focused with the purpose: what is the way you should be able to use your capacity.

How to classify a course: quality for a specific degree? In higher education the institutions are responsible for the degrees. Both in Finland and in Sweden credits are used also in continuing education. In ECTS, the agreements between institutions have guaranteed the quality of transferred credits. If these agreements are discarded, what is the criteria to classify a course and skills obtained.

If the problem is faced through levels of education, there should be some signals showing where the credits come from: secondary school, vocational education, polytechnics, universities, vocational adult education, general education, liberal adult education, etc. What would be the forum where this classification is made?

One can ask in many application area what is the value of (credit based) specific knowledge after ten years? How could the time scale be adapted? In some cases the results/benefits of a course become visible long time after the course. When should the benefits be measured?

There are no democracy in the universities. One idea to get more information for an analyse is to do a pilot in chosen field where an group will make a survey about what really happens in a university. For the moment single professors are Goods in their on field. Does that limit the academic resource?

Main question might be what is the purpose of accounting the credits? If somebody has credits from all kinds of educational institutions, who will be interested in? Are they for qualification, resume, personnel accounts, diploma, etc??

## 5 . List of References

Ammattikorkeakoulut, Yrkeshögskolorna 1999, Opetushallitus, Utbildningsstyrelsen, 1999

The Development of Education 1994-1996 National Report of Finland by the National Board of Education, September 1996, URL: <http://www.edu.fi>

Hildebrand Marianne, 1999: Swedish Higher Education

Nurmela Virpi, 1999: ECTS European Credit Transfer System, Eurooppalaisen opintosuoritusten ja arvosanojen siirtojärjestelmän soveltamisen ongelmista suomalaisissa yliopistoissa

Student handboken, hösten 1999 - våren 2000, Höskoleverket, National Agency for Higher Education

## 1. FINLAND

Name	Role and official position	Date(s)	Place(s)
Juha Ketolainen	Finnish NA	4.3.1999	CIMO
Esko Koponen	Programme Coordinator, ECTS counsellor (Finland)	4.3.1999	CIMO
		9.3.1999	Ministry of Education in Finland
		17.5.1999	CIMO
		6.9.1999	CIMO
Virpi Nurmela	Researcher	9.3.1999	CIMO
		17.5.1999	CIMO
Monica Melen-Paaso	Senior Adviser, Ministry of Education in Finland	9.3.1999	Ministry of Education in Finland
Anita Lehikoinen	Opetusneuvos, Ministry of Education in Finland	9.3.1999	Ministry of Education in Finland
Eija Alhojärvi	Opetusneuvos, Ministry of Education in Finland	9.3.1999	Ministry of Education in Finland
Carita Blomqvist	Senior Adviser, National Board of Education in Finland Finnish NARIC/ENIC	9.3.1999	Ministry of Education in Finland
		7.6.1999	Helia
		18.8.1999	Helia
Timo Ahonen	International Relations Manager, Lahti Polytechnic	11.8.1999	Lahti
Allan Perttunen	Director, International Realtions, Oulu Polytechnic	1.9.1999	Oulu
Eero Leminen	Pääsihteeri, The Rector's Conference of Finnish Polytechnics (Arene ry)	3.9.1999	Arene, Helsinki
Riitta Kataja	International Coordinator	1.9.1999	Oulu
Paula Koskimäki	Project Manager, Lic.Phil., University of Helsinki	24.8.1999	University of Helsinki
Arja Maunumäki	Lecturer, M.A., School of Renewable Natural Resources, Oulu Polytechnic	1.9.1999	Oulu
Leena Kuorelahti	Coordinator of International Programs, Department of Architecture, Oulu University	1.9.1999	Oulu
Ritva Laakso- Manninen	President, Helia	18.2.1999 2.9.1999	Helia
Tapio Markkanen	Pääsihteeri, Suomen yliopistojen rehtorien neuvosto	31.8.1999	University of Helsinki
Lauri Fontell	President, The Institute of Information Technology	19.4.1999 8.10.1999	Helsinki
Marketta Jalava	President, Suomen liikemiesten kauppaopisto	19.4.1999	Helsinki
		8.10.1999	

Plus great number of emails & comments and phonecalls!

## 2. SWEDEN

Karin Dahl Bergendorff	Senior Officer, Department for International Affairs, Swedish NARIC/ENIC, National Agency for Higher Education	20.8.1999	Stockholm
Marianne Hildebrandt		20.8.1999	Stockholm
Bertil Holmberg	Division of Inorganic Chemistry 1, Chemical Center, Lund University	20.8.1999	Stockholm

Plus great number of emails & comments and phonecalls! WEB-sites.

## SUGGESTION FOR A PILOT PROJECT:

### **Work Based Learning as Part of a Study Programme**

Background	<p>Lately, work based learning has become a central issue in all levels of education. In Finland, with the reform of general upper secondary education, work placements become obligatory for all the students. Polytechnics are required to have close connections to the working life and companies in order to be able to educate skilful professionals. New skill based diplomas are totally based on skills earned in working life. For an educational institution this means that to ensure the quality of their graduates they have to be able to assure that working life/work brings any added value. Each educational institution has constructed its own conventions for guiding work based learning and taking advantage of co-operation with companies. It is not so self-evident that these conventions are practical, or that they couldn't be improved.</p>
Objectives	<p>The objective of the project is to collect information about conventions and processes used about the conventions and processes used in making work placements and work-related study units an integral part of a student's degree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ How is work placement organised?</li><li>▪ What kind of guidance is used before and during the placement period?</li><li>▪ What sort of resources are the teachers given for this guidance and how are they paid?</li><li>▪ How is work-based learning measured?</li><li>▪ How is work-based learning utilised in further studies?</li><li>▪ What kind of feedback is collected from the working life/companies? How?</li><li>▪ What kind of influence has this feed back on planning of studies/curricula?</li><li>▪ How well does Europass fulfil the expectations?</li><li>▪ Is it possible to compensate study units with skills/knowledge earned at work?</li><li>▪ If it is possible, what is the system for grading skills/knowledge?</li></ul> <p>One of the objectives for the project is to analyse the collected information against theories made of work-based learning and to produce guidelines for good practice to be used both by staff members in educational institutions and companies.</p>
Target group	<p>The survey will be made both in upper secondary education and in Polytechnics.</p>
Scope	<p>The project will not launch any new research on work-based learning. This project will only gather information about the conventions used, and survey the existing conventions.</p>

## **Appendix 4.7 - Spain**

(Julia González Ferreras – Universidad de Deusto)

### *B.5.- Does your education system use credits?*

The Spanish Higher Education System has been described “structured” as primarily accordingly to a unitary one-tier-system<sup>1</sup>. Most of the higher education is catered for by universities and university like institutions with a very diversified set of programmes ranging from more general academic degrees to the more professionally oriented programmes of various lengths and levels.

In relation to credits, Spain has a national credit system since the Law of November 1987<sup>2</sup>.

Contrary to the level of autonomy reached by the different autonomies of Spain, the Laws relating to Higher Education Degrees relate to the whole of the Spanish State since the homologation of the requirements relate to the possibility of obtaining a degree valid to exercise the profession in any of the different autonomies.

The Spanish credit was, one of the elements in a reform which tried to transform and modernise the “one-tier” degree structure with fairly long and academically integrated university studies.

This 1987 Law, which spelled out the 1983 Reform<sup>3</sup> **define** the national credit and gave it a main role in the new system. Both the definition and the role need to be analysed.

The **definition**: “Credit. The unit of value in teaching. It will correspond to 10 hours of teaching theoretical, practical or its equivalents. The obtention of credits will be conditioned to the systems of verification of knowledge established by the Universities<sup>4</sup>”.

In this earlier definition, the following points need to be taken into consideration:

- 1.- The credit is defined as the key element in the system
- 2.- There is a crucial term in this definition “Enseñanza”: In Spanish this means either teaching or education, better still both, for example we speak about “Enseñanza Superior” meaning Higher Education. So if “enseñanza” is meant in terms of education, then the credit is the unit of value in education, and will correspond to 10 hours of theoretical practical education or its equivalents (in broader terms).
- 3.- The evaluation is clearly explicit as part of getting the credit.

---

<sup>1</sup> Information on Learning Structures in Higher Education in the EU/EEA Countries Report by Jette Kirstein, Copenhagen, 7 June 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Real Decreto 27 de noviembre de 1987 – 1497/1987.

<sup>3</sup> Ley Orgánica de Reforma Universitaria (LRU), 25 de agosto de 1983.

<sup>4</sup> Crédito. La unidad de valor in enseñanza. Corresponde a 10 horas de enseñanza teórica, práctica o sus equivalentes. La obtención de créditos estará condicionada a los sistemas de verificación de conocimiento establecidos por las Universidades.



4.- This definition must be understood in terms of:

- a) what was attempt by the law
  - b) the general practice and
  - c) the evolution suffered in the following years.
- 
- a) It is clear than the law tried to rationalise the duration of the degrees with particular reference to the “excessive teaching hours”<sup>5</sup> and also to incorporate other elements, particularly referring to practical education. This is a constant line throughout the different reform laws<sup>6</sup>
  - b) The general practice, however, in a system where teaching and lecturing in particular strongly dominates Higher Education habits resulted in a general practice of a credit equal to 10 hours of teaching.
  - c) The **evolution**. The awareness that the spirit of the reform has not been fully realised led to two further significant developments: the requirement of making explicit in the study plans the proportion of theoretical and practical parts of the credit weights on the one hand<sup>7</sup> and the **new definition** of credit in 1998 the credit was thus redefined as: “The unit of value of the organised academic activity where theoretical and practical (teaching/education) integrates harmonically with other academically oriented activities, specified in the plan of studies and object, in any case of tutoring and evaluation”<sup>8</sup>. It is also specified in the same document that the percentage of credit for activities academically oriented should not go beyond the 30% except for distant learning, thus implicitly redefining the credit into 7 teaching/education (theoretical/practical) and three for “academically oriented activity”.

A further element and interesting opening for the Spanish Laws in relation to the nature of the credit is their constant reference to the cases where communitary directives clearly specified that the credit will have extraordinary correspondances in order to guarantee the formation of particular professions (Medicine, Odontology, Pharmacy, etc)<sup>9</sup>.

To conclude, in terms of the Spanish credit, it is now in existence by law and covers from the first cycle to the Doctorate, inclusively. It has been meant as a crucial element in the Reform. Its simple definition, the word used in the first document “Enseñanza” and the tradition of heavy weight in teaching / lecturing hours as part of the system meant that it was equated with 10 teaching hours. However, the intention was clearly different. There was a constant opening to communitary directives and above all there is a **redefinition** which is broader in the aspects of education making it move towards students work. The evolution which is following is particularly relevant and encouraging.

#### The rôle of the credits in the Spanish Reform

---

<sup>5</sup> Pgs. 36640 – BOE 14 de diciembre de 1987 – nº 298

<sup>6</sup> MENCIONAR LEYES

<sup>7</sup> 11 de junio de 1994 – BOE nº 139, pp. 18415

<sup>8</sup> BOE nº 104 – Viernes, 1 de mayo de 1998 pp. 14696

<sup>9</sup> BOE Nº 139 – Sábado, 1 de junio de 1994 pp. 18417

The Spanish Reform explains itself as a major attempt to link education with social and professional needs as an attempt to give a higher degree of flexibility to a former very rigid system and to try to attain higher degrees of profitability to the human resources present at each establishment of Higher Education. This is attained by a redefinition of the contents and the introduction of a cyclical system composed by a first cycle corresponding to basic education and general formation ending up in a degree of “diplomado” and in some cases education oriented towards the preparation of professional activities.

The second cycle devoted to the deepening and specialisation, together with the preparation for professional activities ending up normally in 2 years with a degree of “Licenciado”.

In this context the Spanish credit again gains relevance. It becomes the key element in the road to flexibility since the professional profiles, the levels of speciality, the characteristics of the different universities, the level of students choice of the response to a particular context is all measured in credits.

Equally, in this context, the number of credits (and not really the years spent) are the real definition of each of the cycles or the degrees in each study programme.

The Spanish system envisaged from start an **accumulative** dimension to the credits. Thus, in order to bring a level of consistency and to avoid the “a la carte” risk it contains the description of the contents of the students study plan divided into:

- 1.- Core subjects (equal to all the students register for the same degree all over Spain).
- 2.- Subjects determined by each University for a particular degree with character of compulsory or optional. This allows a level of autonomy to the Universities or to the region.
- 3.- Subjects of free choice by the students in order to attain a degree of personal specialisation in their curriculum.

The credits became also relevant means to measure the proportion of each in the study programme presented by the Universities<sup>10</sup> in the study programme to be approved by the Consejo de Universidades.

As a consequence, the complicated conjunction of regulated elements and universities choice created a situation of unequal number of credits per year, per subject and per degree. This was clearly envisaged by the legal texts which defined issues by way of maximum and minimum, i.e. the year will consist of between 60 and 90 credits in the earlier texts. Equally in the legal text of 1994 speaks about degrees of two cycles with in any case lower than 120 credits per cycle (cycle of 2 or 3 years) and a total never below 300 credits (4 or 5 years).

In relation to the role of the national credits in the Spanish system, we could sum up as follows:

- 1.- The credit is the **key element of flexibility** and design in the architecture.
- 2.- The educational programmes count on it as an important piece in the **measure of contents** of formation.

---

<sup>10</sup> 30% of core subjects in first cycle and 25% in second cycle and not lower than 10% of free choice subjects for the students. Leaving slightly over the half to the choice of the Universities as compulsory or optional subjects

3.- There has been an **interesting reflection** of credits in its **accumulative dimension**

**Life long learning** and **distant learning** in Spain takes place as parts of University system and are run by the Universities. The system of credits is therefore equal to the former explained

*7.- Is your national credit system compatible with the existing European Credit Transfer System? If your answer is no, please explain the incompatibility.*

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the system is compatible with a mathematical conversion of the number of credits to 60 credits. This conversion is clear practice in the information catalogues of the Spanish Universities and in their learning contracts and transcripts. This allows recognition without any problem.

The difficulty emerges from the fact that there are varying numbers of national credits per University and year and degree, sometimes very close to 60 but able to reach 90. Discussions have been initiated among the Spanish Universities at this very critical moment when the majority of them are initiating the second reform. Two roads are possible at this moment either to have two systems (the national system and the eCTS) running parallel to each other. For ECTS as credit transfer, this is possible although expensive in resources and not the easiest and clearest. It is also evident that ECTS in this respect would be a peripheral element only for mobility students.

If ECTS becomes also an accumulation system, then the situation will become even more difficult for the University administrations with two different systems running at the same time. The second road, therefore, would be for both systems to converge. It is in this direction that the discussions have already been initiated among the Spanish Universities after achieving convergence at the conceptual level.

8.- The people consulted saw no problem in this respect. There are no barriers as such, only the difficulty explained above. In fact, the Spanish national system is an accumulation system and could offer an approach and a reference point of how different countries or Universities could deal with accumulation integrating different elements – compulsory, optional of students choice.

9.- In relation to both vocational Education and Professional Education in Spain, there are no national credits which means that the problem mentioned about credits do not exists and there is no real problem for a European system.

In the case of life long learning and distance education, it is important to know that the Universities in Spain are the major agents of these two types of education. In this respect, the difficulties with the credit system are the same as with the rest of the University credits. In the case of part time education, it would depend whether it belongs to the vocational professional world or to the university related education.

10.- The people consulted express the believe that this was

- Needed for consistency if a European image was to be attained
- It would favour mobility at every stage in life of a person and it was particularly positive the attitude of those related to professional and vocational education.
- It would make education more transparent and readable at all levels.
- It was an exed consequence of .he objec.ive of freedom of labour in Europe.
- A move impossible to stop in a global society for a Europe built together.
- Not only good but unavoidable
- An extra challenge to face with a recognition of the national weakness and strengths.

In all cases, people consulted seem to emphasise the positive elements, not to think of the possible investments to be made and focused more in the importance and possible good impact for Europe than in the probable efforts of adapting systems.

11.- Most of the people interviewed did not know enough to answer this. One of the people interviewed expressed his desire that the English language would cease to have the high levels of hegemony which it has in the system. Other points relate to:

- The clarity of the credit point which is not always clearly defined in the different universities and national systems being the key element in the system.
- A crucial thing to develop fully and to push to be implemented is the grading system with the developments needed. While the ECTS system has been widely generalised, the ECTS grading system is very frequently not included. This element of common language and point of reference is clearly underdeveloped, often not understood. This often brings about inconveniences for the students with lack of full transparency in relation to value of their marks in relation to the context. The degree of resistance could hide elements that need some further clarification, simplification or development. On the other hand, one could envisage the impact of a common language in levels of performance for acceptance to further degrees or research or for employment. In this respect, ECTS is undervalued in its potential and further levels of fairness could be studied.

12.- Yes

13.- Yes. It is already doing it but it could still do it at a higher degree. At the moment, making the systems more transparent has provoked reflection and changes in different relevant manners, but it is in most cases a peripheral element and the real transparency would come when it becomes the reference language use for all the students at an Educational Institution.

14.- The Spanish Universities are at a very crucial moment in relation to the issue of number of credits. The ECTS Counsellors and the International Relations Vice-Rectors and the Managers have prepared a programme to analyse the problems and to study the most favourable road to convergence. The steps involving the Conference of Spanish Rectors and the Consejo de Universidades are being designed. Equally, the road to the political authorities is being initiated. A successful solution will make not only life easier for the universities organisations and more transparent for European students but also a significant step forward in the road of harmonisation for a large European member state with significant participation. The Directorate General for Education in the Commission could, perhaps, assist and have an informative presence in this process. In the case of Spain, this is regarded as having a positive impact.

15.- Everybody consulted agreed that, despite the difficulties, it was a good time to use the push of both the Paris and the Bologna declarations on the one hand, and the success of the ECTS to offer the new challenge of accumulation.

For the Spanish Universities, the sooner the movement starts the better since the majority are doing their Reforms now (for the second time) and in any case the concrete number of credits are not so traditionally settled yet.

The level of Reforms taking place in Europe will favour the move towards accumulation making mobility easier all along life but also a more transparent system when employment and degrees are dealt with.

Personally, I think that it is important to keep a level of challenges and that it is appropriate for SOCRATES II to push this given the social and political tempo.

<b>CONSULTED INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b><u>PEOPLE CONTACTED</u></b>	<b><u>POST</u></b>	<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>PLACE</u></b>
Basque Government. Delegation of Culture. Bizkay County Council.	Arantxa Uriarte	Co-ordinator	08-10-99	BILBAO
Biscay Managers' Confederation (Confederación Empresarial de Bizkaia).	Nestor Eriz	Responsible of the Education Department Member of the Basque Council of Professional Education	25-10-99	BILBAO
C.I.D.E.A.D General Sub-direction of Permanent Education. General Secretary of Education and Professional Learning	Aurelio Gómez Feced	General Director	17-05-99	MADRID
C.I.D.O.B. International Centre of Documentation of Barcelona	Elvira Sánchez	Head of Studies	03-10-99	BARCELONA
CC.OO. Trade Union	José Luis Ruiz	Secretary of Education and Employment of Euskadi Member of the Basque Council of Professional Education	26-10-99	BILBAO
E.O.I. Official School of Languages. Dassanas	Pilar Ferreiro	Head of Studies	03-10-99	BARCELONA
ESC.SC2 Formacio* Gran Gracia	Carlo Mañé	Head of Studies	04-10-99	BARCELONA
Generalitat of Catalonia. Department of Education. General Direction of Educational Arrangement. General Subdirection of Permanent Education.	Carme Amorós i Basté	Coordinator of Programming and Planification.	05-10-99	BARCELONA
Generalitat of Catalonia. Institute of New Professions.	Pablo González i Díaz	Teaching Area	04-10-99	BARCELONA
Guipúzcoa county council	Berta Díez	Expert on Human Resources	25-10-99	Local office in BILBAO
I.C.E. Institute of Educational Sciences. University of Deusto	Itziar Elezpuru	Chief of education of the teaching staff Full Professor of F.I.C.E.	18-10-99	BILBAO
I.N.E.M (National Institute for Employment)	Mª Jesús Sasieta	Director	27-10-99	BILBAO

International House	Jordi Bordas Coca	Director	03-10-99	BARCELONA
International University Study Center	Ramón Solé i Belles	Head of Studies	02-11-99	BARCELONA
European Lawyer Bar Association	Emilio González	Permanent Secretary of STAGE Member of the International Relations Committee.	27-10-99	BILBAO
Ministry of Education and Culture. County Direction of Salamanca	Virgilio López Hernández	Teaching Technical Adviser of the Adult Educational Department.	29-10-99	SALAMANCA
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Sub- direction of Professional, occupational and continuous Learning	José Luis García Molina	Programme Director	19-07-99	MADRID
Ministry of Education and Culture. General Sub-Direction of Titles, recognition and harmonisation	Francisco Javier García- Velasco	Technical Adviser	19-07-99	MADRID
Ministry of Education and Culture. State Secretary of Education, Universities, Research and Development	Vicente Ortega	General Secretary of the University Council	20-07-99	MADRID
School of Industrial Organisation	Francisco Sanchís	Academic Director Former subdirector of International Co- operation of the Ministry of Education and Culture.		MADRID
Town Hall of Santander	Maite Espi	Expert on educational activities.		SANTANDER (Cantabria)
U.G.T. Trade Union	Carlos Trevilla	General Secretary. U.G.T. Representative for the Social European Fund	27-10-99	BILBAO
U.N.E.D. (National University of Distance Education)	Carmen Sicilia	Chief of Permanent Education	26-10-99	MADRID
University of Cadiz	Felicidad Rodríguez	Vice-Rector of International Relations	21-07-99	Telephone conversation
University of Deusto	Luis Miguel Villar	Vice-Rector of Academic Arrangement	21-05-99	BILBAO
University of Deusto	Manuel Cuenca Cabeza	Vice-Rector of University Extension	19-04-99	BILBAO
Universidad de la Experiencia.		Director	29-10-99	SALAMANCA



University of Extremadura	Miguel Rodríguez Cancho	Vice-Rector of University Extension	17-05-99	MADRID
Universitat Oberta. Open University	Luis Tarín	Director of long-life education	05-10-99	BARCELONA
University of Oviedo	Moisés Lordén Miñambres	Vice-Rector of University Extension	17-05-99	MADRID
University Rey Juan Carlos	Rafaela Pagani	Vice-Rector of International Relations	10-07-99	AVEIRO
University of Valladolid	Mar Fernández	Director of International Relations	09-06-99	SANTANDER
University of Zaragoza	Fidel Corcuera	Vice-Rector of International Relations	19-07-99	MADRID
Vice-Secretary of the General Council of Universities	M. Teresa Díaz Iturrioz	Delegate for International Relations	08-04-99	BILBAO
Vice-Secretary of the General Council of Universities	Rosa Inés	Delegate of the National Erasmus Agency	08-04-99	BILBAO

## **LONG LIFE LEARNING**

In relation to long life learning in Spain all the agents consulted emphasised the positive aspects of creating a European framework. This was not only regarded as a possibility for enhancing co-operation and exchange with the outside world, but also as a tool for creating harmony at country level.

In fact, long life learning in Spain is in need of conceptual clarification, at least two definitions coexist:

According to the Spanish Law of General Organisation of the Educational System (LOGSE) **permanent education** is the basic integrating and organisative principle of all person's education. It must cover all life long and all the life's dimensions in a continuous learning process. It implies a global focus both in formal and non-formal education, in other words, what is known as integral education.

**Adult education** is defined in the same law as an organised group of processes of education and training oriented to adult people, in order to acquire, update, complete or enlarge their knowledge and aptitudes for their personal and professional development.

Secondly, there is a variety of levels, objectives, agents, etc. Then, there is the division between officially and non-officially regulated according to whether it depends on:

- The Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture or the Autonomous Institutions, (when competencies are transferred) or
- Private or Public Institutions.

There is also a distinction on the specific aim, particularly in relation to whether it is aiming at the attainment of a degree with the tendency, (in the majority of the cases, by no means all), to obtain better professional positions or personal development.

Annexe I, tries to bring in a level of classification into a very complex pattern of so called long life learning activities. Besides, in Spain there is the added element of different levels proper to a very de-centralised system. In fact, this "*competencia*" has been transferred to all the autonomies except Castilla La Mancha and Asturias, so every autonomy is creating its own pattern of development, some as in the case of Catalonia or the Basque country are quite advanced, not only in the creation of programmes at the level of autonomy but also in the creation of their own "*Instituto de Cualificaciones*". It is these Institutes, together with the newly constituted centre at the level of the State<sup>13</sup> that are trying to create common guide lines in order to articulate professional qualifications, beginning with the specific educational programmes for each branch, speciality, etc. following the delimitation of minimum standards in order to reach the required level of skills proper to each profession.

As general points of reference, there are several laws starting with the Spanish Organic Law of the General Arrangement of the Educational System (LOGSE) (1/1990, 3rd of October)<sup>14</sup>, fosters the opportunity for every adult citizen the access to the educational

---

<sup>13</sup> Members of these bodies have been interviewed for this report.

<sup>14</sup> La Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo (LOGSE), en su título III, dedicado a la educación de personas adultas, encomienda a las Administraciones educativas, en su artículo 53.1, la adopción de medidas tendentes a ofrecer a todos los ciudadanos la oportunidad de acceder a los niveles o grados de las enseñanzas no obligatorias reguladas en dicha Ley. Por otra parte, en su artículo 51.5 establece que la organización y la metodología de la educación de adultos se basarán en el auto

levels or degrees non compulsory regulated by law. Regulation of the life long education is very general, so every autonomous community applies the implementation of the law according to their criteria. In that connection, there is a level confusion when trying to define the concept of life-long education, which varies not only from an autonomous community to another but from an institution to another too, and also depending on the group to be addressed.

***Another common point of reference is the new national programme for vocational training which is being implemented from 1998 onwards.***

The objectives<sup>15</sup> are common or horizontal to the three subsystems (regulated/initial vocational training, vocational training and continuous training) and establish the framework for the structuring and articulation of the whole, through common points of reference and measures tending towards a greater co-ordination and, in turn, integration of the actions carried out by the three subsystems. This aims could be summed up as:

1. Creation of a national system of vocational qualifications with the participation of the autonomous communities, which sees life-long training, through the integration of the three subsystems of vocational training.
2. Qualifications for incorporation into the job market through the co-operation of enterprise and education.
3. Development of an integrated system of information and vocational guidance.
4. Guaranteeing the quality, evaluation and monitoring of vocational training.
5. Creating a European related framework and dimension to vocational training.
6. Programming the offer to groups with specific needs.

In this respect the UNED ("*Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia*") which is the only university at State level finds difficult at the level of validation of degrees and study plans due to the diversity at the level of autonomies.

This brief description of the context reveals the importance that European frames of reference could have in the case of Spain at this particular moment when the points of reference are being elaborated.

Besides, there was present in a number of the interviewed people the reflection on the need to analyse professional qualifications though the consideration (evaluation?) of working experience and, of course, the whole issue of measuring the process and creating a unit of reference.

#### **4 MEASURING UNITS IN LONG LIFE EDUCATION**

Scarce legislation has been passed on the regulating and standardisation of units for measuring courses and programmes for adult, life long, professional and continuous education in Spain. Official studies are more regulated than non-official ones, that is why contents, achievements and programmes of the official studies are more concrete and settled.

When talking about non-official permanent education a general rule does not exist for measuring the courses and programmes offered by different private and public

---

aprendizaje, en función de sus experiencias, necesidades e intereses, a través de la enseñanza presencial y, por sus adecuadas características, de la educación a distancia.

<sup>15</sup> See Annexe II: The New National Vocational Training Programme 1998-2002.

institutions. Every Autonomous autonomy official education board, except two of them (Castilla La Mancha and Extremadura, who do not have the right to legislate education autonomically) decide how to implement the general Spanish regulation. In that sense, there is a broad spectrum of practical applications of the law, and different private and public institutions implement it following their principles, curricula, aims and philosophy.

The most common unit used nowadays is the “class-hour”:

INEM (“*Instituto Nacional de Empleo*”), trade union’s courses, masters, postgraduate programmes, language courses, etc. are measured by their length, in hours.

Nevertheless, almost all the institutions consulted seemed to have integrated elements of integral education, and include beside exams and continuous evaluation, other forms of measuring personal development.

Many of the consulted experts underlined the importance to have a harmonised unit that included and measured:

Competencies and,

Acquired Knowledge and abilities such as team work, communication, socialisation,

Personal attitudes and development

Professional capacities and skills

Some speak about units of competence which could describe what it needs to be known. Some describe methods, units for which could evaluate the applied learning to personal contexts.

The possibility of elaborating a European reference unit would be welcome because of the contribution in the process of reflexion and definition which are taking place at the moment and also as a reference point creating balance also at the country level.

## **Recognition**

An important element underlying long life education programmes and courses in the different instances of recognition.

The official programmes at National level are recognised by the Ministry of Education and Culture, when competencies are not transferred the Autonomous Communities.

Nevertheless, the non-official studies given by public and private institutions have a variety of forms to be recognised. Universities develop and recognise masters and post-graduate programmes.

Trade Unions and enterprises seek the recognition of INEM<sup>16</sup>, enterprises vary depending on their own nature and that of their alliances, or the ICEs (Institutos de Ciencias de la Educación) which normally dedicate to in service courses for educational professionals and relate to six years periods and the needs for training during this period for promotion.

The majority of the courses are standardised by hours of presence. Generally, credits are not given even though in some institutions they are called “*modulos horarios*”.

---

<sup>16</sup> *Instituto Nacional de Empleo*. This validates its own courses and other bodies associated by agreement. This uses the module and not the credit as the main unit.

There is a National Certificate of Qualification which depends on the National Council for Professional Training. This is at present studying a National System of Qualification. A similar situation is taking place at the level of a number of Autonomies. In this context, some of the interviewed people remarked of the opportunity of an authority (the European Institute of the Professions?) who could help with the harmonisation of process and levels in the field of Professional Formation.

## **CONCLUSION OF SURVEY OPINIONS**

The general opinion of every persons consulted is that a European harmonised system of European credits would be beneficial if this system was able to take into consideration national characteristics and needs and would respect the specific ethos of each society. A system which could combine the capacity to be rooted in the concrete social reality and be in harmony at the general level in a flexible manner so that the resources could be maximised. In the case of Spain, this system would be extra beneficial due to the difficulty of co-ordination which seems to result from the authonomic diversity.

The tendency is clearly to have a system which could be harmonised and with criteria to have a unit of credit which could be valid to recognise long life education throughout Europe. Elements like context, clarity and flexibility in the indicators seem to be regarded as major elements.

Table I shows the main comments of the people interviewed according to the opportunities, strengths and weakness they emphasised. Finally, there were a number of proposals that emerged:

1. European observatories should be created in order to have a pulse of the socio-economic reality. That will help to know how the market changes and with it the skills to be considered in the programmes of professional training. Parallel to those European Observatories, local ones should function at the local level to have the information at micro level.
2. There were the characteristics suggested for the system:
  - a) Very Flexible and modular: One "A la Carta Menu".
  - b) With clear and written documentation.
  - c) Led by a European team.
  - d) Favouring languages in the programmes to facilitate professionals' mobility.
  - e) With clear authority and procedures for the official recognition in credits.

**OFFICIALLY REGULATED \***

\* It depends on the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture or the Autonomous Institutions. Most of them have competencies transferred, except Castilla La Mancha and Asturias.

*Non University Level*

**Distant Education**

- General Studies:
- Primary Level
- Secondary Level
- Professional Studies
- Bachelor's Degree

Special Studies:

- Official Language Schools (some of their courses validate credits of free choice for university students)
- Artistic learning: Music, Dramatic Art, Design, sculpture and modelling

Personal Development

- Programmes of Social Guarantee. Professional Studies for Young People.
- C.E.A. (Centres of Education for Adult People) Responsibility of Town Halls
- Educational Programmes of the County Councils and the Autonomous Institutions.
- Adult Education

**University Level**

Distant Education:

- Official Degrees U.N.E.D. (National University of Distant Education)
- Univeritat Oberta (Open University)

**NON OFFICIALLY REGULATED\***

\* It depends on Private or Public Institutions, which titles are not official

**Organised by Universities\***  
**\*There is a Law of University Regulation**

Education for Higher Professions:

- Post-graduate Programmes
  - a) U.N.E.D. (National University of Distant Education)
  - b) Public and Private Universities
  - c) Other institutions
- Masters: Programmes for the adaptation to a job
- Specialised courses
- Recycling (in service courses).
- Updating programmes for teachers.
- I.C.E.s (Institute for Educational Sciences)

Personal Development:

- Popular Universities
- Experience Universities

**Organised by Institutions other than Universities**

Vocational Education:

- To educate for employment:
  - a) Courses of Professional Training
  - b) Courses organized by Trade Unions
  - c) I.N.E.N.. (National Institute for Employment)
  - d) Enterprises
- To train for changing from a job to another
- To improve/update within the same job

## ANNEXE II:

### THE NEW NATIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME 1998-2002

The idea of the National programme as the backbone of the policy for Vocational Training, has already a considerable history, of which the most significant milestones have been:

- 1985 The creation of the National Vocational Training and Incorporation Programme (FIP Plan) directed at certain groups in the working population, with the aim of providing them with the qualifications required by the productive system and incorporating them into the labour market. Up-dated periodically, since 1993 it has directed its action towards unemployed workers.
- 1986 The establishment of the General Council for Vocational Training, with its tripartite composition, as a consultative organ, as an institutional participant, and as a counselling body for the Government in matters of vocational training, with the first task of <<drawing up and proposing to the Government, for its approval, the National Training Programme>>.
- 1990 The Basic Law of the General Ordering of the Educational System (LOGSE), in which the principles and guidelines of the new regulated vocational training and its relationship with vocational occupational training and the whole of the educational system were established.
- 1992 The signing of the National and Tripartite Agreements on Continuous Training, for a period of four years (1992-1996), where a framework and action model were fixed in this context for the first time.
- 1993 Approval of the first National Vocational Training Programme (1993-1996).
- 1996 Agreement of the Bases for Vocational Training Policy, a document drawn up within the framework of social dialogue, linking the first Programme (1993-1996) with the New National Vocational Training Programme.  
  
Signing of the II National and Tripartite Agreements on Continuous Training (1996-2000).
- 1997 Modification of the Law by which the General Council for Vocational Training, was created (Law 19/1997 of 9<sup>th</sup> June), to make way for the full incorporation of the Autonomous Communities in its composition.
- 1998 Approval of the New National Vocational Training Programme (1998-2002).

If social dialogue preceded the New National Vocational Training Programme, it was made possible and enriched by the now full participation of the Autonomous Communities.

#### *Foundations of the National Programme*

The New National Vocational Training Programme is based on the following foundations:

1. The consideration of Vocational Training as an investment in human resources.
2. The integration of Vocational Training into the active policies of employment with a community dimension.
3. The participation of the General State Administration, of the social agents and of the Autonomous Communities, within the General Council of Vocational Training.
4. The creation of the National Qualifications System.

The National Programme which is conceived as a working programme for five years, 1998-2002, is based on the idea established by the European Union of life-long learning, so that the measures provided for the subsystems of initial regulated training, continuous training and vocational training are defined and interconnected, starting from the principle of active co-operation among the General State Administration, the Autonomous Communities and the social agent.



## EXPERTS' REACTIONS TO AN ECTS FRAMEWORK

<i>OPORTUNITIES</i>	STRENGHS	<b>WEAKNESS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Every consulted person agreed that a harmonised system would have more advantages than inconveniences. Many people think it would be problematic, because there are many aspects and details to be taken into account in order to get an efficient, little bureaucratic and rationalised system</li> <li>▪ Many of the interviewees stated that they could imagine an educational and training system in which students could acquire credits being accounted for their life-long learning account</li> <li>▪ "Inform us about the results of the feasibility study" "Keep us in the picture"</li> <li>▪ Imbalance between autonomic, State and EU level which will be interesting to remedy</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distrust about the level of experience to be comparable in every country of the EU.</li> <li>▪ Danger of creation of first class, second class, ... professionals</li> <li>▪ Cultural differences and susceptibilities</li> <li>▪ Creation of a large bureaucratic apparatus</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 4.8 - France**

(Michel Jouve – Socrates France)

# Rapport sur l'enquête de faisabilité de l'extension de l'ECTS

Expert : Michel JOUVE

Le présent rapport reprendra d'abord la structure générale du questionnaire élaboré par Stephen ADAM, qui a été traduit en français à mon initiative pour en assurer une meilleure efficacité sur le plan national, puis quelques commentaires additionnels, liste des structures et de personnes contact consultées ou susceptibles de l'être et conclusions seront ajoutés. Des annexes diverses seront fournies afin d'offrir quelques documents de soutien (textes réglementaires, comptes-rendus particuliers de réunion, dépliants etc.).

## **INTRODUCTION**

Le cadre retenu pour une enquête courte du type de celle entreprise a été celui de l'éducation à travers la vie dans l'enseignement supérieur et dans l'EOD. Par ailleurs, l'extension de l'ECTS comme système d'accumulation et non plus seulement de transfert a aussi été abordée.

La consultation a concerné soit des individus, en raison de leur compétence spécifique, soit des groupements ou institutions dont la liste sera donnée en annexe. L'enquête a par ailleurs permis d'identifier d'autres interlocuteurs dont il n'a pas été possible d'obtenir l'avis, mais dont il est indispensable de connaître l'identité pour une phase ultérieure éventuelle du présent projet. Il a été noté par la Conférence des Présidents d'Université française que le rapport préparatoire à la Conférence de Bologne ainsi que la déclaration qui en a résulté soulignent la possible transformation à venir de l'ECTS d'un système de transfert de crédits en un système de transfert et d'accumulation et que cette nouvelle conception permettrait de couvrir toutes les formes d'apprentissage, y compris la formation à temps partiel et la formation tout au long de la vie.

En préambule, il convient également de souligner que plusieurs personnes ont souligné qu'il fallait aboutir à des définitions claires et consensuelles de certains des concepts employés dans le questionnaire ; ces ambiguïtés n'existent pas forcément dans toutes les langues européennes, mais de toute façon la différence entre des concepts voisins existe bel et bien. Cela se pose notamment sur les termes « formation professionnelle » et « formation permanente ».

Une autre évolution significative en France doit être soulignée : la formation permanente pour les salariés en exercice avait très largement comme finalité une promotion ; or, les formations promotionnelles (qui continuent naturellement d'exister) tendent à être supplantées numériquement par les formations de conversions, soit à l'attention de salariés dotés d'un emploi, soit de chômeurs.

Donc, l'offre émanant de l'Université devrait profondément évoluer pour s'adapter à ce nouveau contexte. L'individualisation des parcours et la demande croissante de validation des acquis professionnels devraient entraîner une diversification et une flexibilité de l'offre pour satisfaire

l'attente de parcours individualisés ou de cycles spécialement aménagés pour des adultes ayant une expérience professionnelle. Dans ces conditions, le besoin pour un système de validation des unités de formation se manifeste permettant de rendre possible ce type de parcours.

## **SITUATION NATIONALE AU REGARD DES CREDITS**

**Le secteur éducatif français n'a pas introduit un système national de crédits.** Il n'y a donc pas de « culture crédits » actuellement en rapport avec l'éducation et la formation. Cependant, dans le domaine de l'enseignement supérieur, le grand succès de l'ECTS, employé d'abord dans le cadre de la gestion de la mobilité étudiante ERASMUS, a familiarisé ses acteurs avec le concept et ses avantages ; aussi, dans le cours de notre enquête, il n'y a pas eu de temps d'adaptation pour beaucoup de nos interlocuteurs. Ceci me donne à penser que **l'éventuelle extension de ce système à d'autres champs que celui pour lequel il avait été initialement conçu ne posera pas de problème psychologique ou intellectuel.** Déjà, certains établissements se réfèrent aux crédits ECTS dans le cadre de la gestion de la scolarité de certains de leurs étudiants.

En outre, l'utilisation de **l'ECTS comme système d'accumulation** est tout à fait **compatible avec la réglementation française en matière de délivrance de diplômes** universitaires, puisque la loi prévoit que ceux-ci peuvent être obtenus soit par compensation (donc en considérant globalement les composantes requises pour accéder à ces diplômes) soit par capitalisation (donc accumulation). Dans ce cas, il ne serait pas compliqué de faire admettre que l'ECTS fournit un outil susceptible de gérer dans la transparence cette capitalisation.

## **OBSTACLES ET DIFFICULTES POUR L'EXTENSION DE L'ECTS**

De l'avis unanime des personnes et organismes consultés, si le besoin d'un outil efficace est manifeste, les obstacles sont considérables. Cela s'appuie sur l'expérience acquise en ce domaine puisque, sans référence à l'ECTS, diverses tentatives d'élaboration d'une méthode de reconnaissance et de validation plus normative que les pratiques empiriques inégalement efficaces auxquelles on a eu recours en ce domaine se sont révélées décevantes ou impossibles à mettre en œuvre.

D'emblée, il n'apparaît pas qu'il y ait incompatibilité entre l'utilisation de l'ECTS et la réglementation en la matière en France (un résumé et copie des textes réglementaires majeurs seront

entraîné par voie de conséquence une défiance, qui s'atténue certes, à l'égard de la validation d'acquis professionnels ou d'autres parcours de formation menant à l'accès à une compétence qui demande à être validée. Il est vrai aussi qu'un argument des adversaires de cette évolution doit sérieusement être pris en considération : **il n'existe pas d'instrument reconnu efficace pour évaluer les compétences**, au même titre qu'on pense en avoir trouvé pour évaluer les compétences (ou plutôt le savoir) des étudiants en formation initiale. Il est clair que cet argument est un alibi : l'absence d'instrument pourrait être une incitation à redoubler d'effort pour en inventer ; cependant l'obstacle existe et les attitudes qu'il induit doivent être prises en compte.

**Les obstacles techniques** sont liés à la **diversité de nature entre les éléments pertinents qui doivent être pris en considération aussi bien pour la validation d'acquis antérieurs en termes de savoir et de compétence**, que pour les nouveaux contenus de formation et d'éducation que les individus acquièrent tout au long de la vie. Il a été noté qu'il n'existait pas d'outil standardisé pour mesurer l'ensemble de ces éléments et que là où il en existe, ceux-ci ne sont pas compatibles que ce soit nationalement ou sur le plan européen. De même, il a été souligné qu'il est extrêmement **difficile d'apprécier une charge de travail** en ce domaine ; c'est pourtant fondamental si l'on veut introduire un système de crédits. Des réflexions ont déjà été menées au sein notamment des établissements ayant fait de la formation permanente une de leurs priorités sinon leur priorité absolue (un exemple parmi d'autres en France : le CNAM). Il conviendrait donc de s'appuyer sur cette richesse afin d'approfondir la réflexion initiée par la présente enquête.

**Les obstacles conceptuels** sont surtout liés à des positions que l'on pourrait qualifier de politiques, au sens large du terme. Selon que l'on prend en compte le point de vue des pouvoirs publics, des formateurs institutionnels, du patronat (ou plus généralement des employeurs) ou des syndicats, **les définitions et les objectifs divergent** de manière parfois radicale. Il est nécessaire de trouver un point de convergence entre elles si l'on veut voir accepter de manière relativement universelle un système de reconnaissance et de validation. **Le concept de compétence** est au cœur de cette problématique. La démarche compétence initiée par le MEDEF (Mouvement des entreprises) n'est pas simplement liée à des questions de grille déterminant les classifications et rémunérations ; elle l'est également aux conditions dans lesquelles les compétences individuelles et collectives se développent. Tant que l'on s'en tient à l'aspect des compétences liées à l'exercice du métier, l'évaluation des compétences demeure relativement objectivable, mais dès que l'on entre dans le domaine des compétences sociales et humaines, les critères de références manquent. Cependant, l'entreprise souhaite de plus en plus prendre en considération ces derniers critères ; on devine que cette évolution accroît la **remise en question des systèmes traditionnels de certification et de validation**. Une mise en garde s'impose donc à nous : il serait dangereux de vouloir mettre trop rapidement en pratique, sur un plan généralisé, des notions qui n'auraient pas fait l'objet de réflexions suffisantes.

Dans ses conclusions, la CRE souhaite que, sur le plan européen on trouve une « devise d'échange », donc un système fondé sur l'emploi de crédits, associé au mécanisme en voie d'être diffusé du « supplément au diplôme », afin d'offrir la transparence dont l'absence s'inscrit en filigrane dans la plupart des obstacles mentionnés ci-dessus.

## AVANTAGES DE LA CREATION D'UN CADRE EUROPEEN D'ACCUMULATION DE CREDITS

Sur cet aspect particulier de notre enquête, je tiens à souligner le précieux apport de Michel Feutrie (Université des Sciences et Techniques de Lille) dont certaines formulations seront reprises verbatim.

Les avantages de l'existence d'un système d'accumulation de crédits ne sont pas fondamentalement différents pour la formation permanente et pour la formation initiale. Si l'on admet que **la va et vient tout au long de la vie entre activité et formation** va s'accroître au cours des années à venir, la confusion sera de plus en plus forte entre formation initiale et formation continue. Les dispositifs mis en place s'adresseront donc aux deux catégories de public.

**La pratique de la mobilité européenne** ne se définit cependant pas de la même manière pour les étudiants en formation initiale et pour les personnes engagées dans la vie, avec les contraintes de l'activité professionnelle et de la vie sociale. Le parcours universitaire pourra de moins en moins s'envisager sans une mobilité ; sur le plan professionnel, la majorité des mobilités est encore majoritairement liée aux contraintes imposées par l'entreprise elle-même. Elle s'inscrit donc dans un plan de carrière, ou est liée à un souci d'enrichir une expérience professionnelle. Cependant, le nombre de personnes choisissant la mobilité afin de trouver l'emploi qui leur convient hors de leurs frontières est en constante progression. La compatibilité et la validation des formations et des acquis dans ce contexte deviennent un enjeu important.

**Un des avantages d'un système d'accumulation de crédits est d'abord d'être associable à un découpage lisible sur une base extra-nationale de cursus de formation en unités cohérentes.** Ceci permet à l'adulte de fractionner son effort dans le temps grâce à l'offre de parcours souples. Le découpage par unités permet d'isoler dans la construction des savoirs et des capacités des sous-ensembles propices à une mise en correspondance de la formation avec l'activité professionnelle, sociale et avec l'expérience accumulée, ce qu'une formation déclinée en grands champs disciplinaires permet moins.

Un autre avantage découle du précédent : **le découpage a un effet de « construction de référentiel »**, et surtout d'un référentiel lisible par d'autres personnes que celles qui ont mis en place la formation ou le diplôme. Il y a nécessairement dans l'allocation de crédits une réflexion sur ce qui fait le cœur de l'apprentissage, sur les capacités que l'on veut développer chez l'apprenant. Cela nous amène à constater que le **concept de « charge de travail »** doit être abordé de manière sensiblement différente de celle mise en œuvre dans le cadre de l'ECTS traditionnel. Ce travail est essentiel car il rapproche la formation de son utilité professionnelle.

Un autre avantage d'un système de crédits : il permet de **construire des parcours**. Actuellement en France, les parcours universitaires professionnalisés sont conçus de manière relativement étanche : le recrutement des apprenants se fait largement en fonction de cursus antérieurs bien ciblés et la formation débouche sur des « métiers » ou groupes de métiers spécifiques. Or les professions se définissent aujourd'hui de moins en moins en fonction de ce type de critères cylindriques. Elles se situent à **l'intersection de plusieurs champs disciplinaires et se développent dans la transversalité**. Les projets professionnels des adultes, naturellement fortement ancrés dans la

réalité de l'activité professionnelle, ne peuvent être satisfaits par les découpages disciplinaires étroits. Ces adultes attendent qu'on leur propose des parcours de formation prenant en compte à la fois leur expérience et leur projet. L'offre de formation dans un champ donné doit permettre un choix d'unités ou de modules adaptés : cela est possible sans tomber dans le « self-service », dont la CPU souligne qu'il faut se méfier, et donc sans nuire à la certification qui sera délivrée à la fin. Le système de crédits est donc très propice à cette souhaitable évolution, tout en facilitant l'extension à d'autres pays européens.

Un autre avantage souligné est qu'un système dérivé de l'ECTS permettrait une **transparence de l'affichage de l'offre de formation**, sur une base harmonisée avec une possibilité de comparaison ; le choix de l'apprenant et les processus de reconnaissance (liés à la confiance et à la transparence) s'en trouveraient améliorés.

Sur le plan méthodologique, plusieurs personnes ont fait remarquer qu'il convenait de commencer par la structure des formations ; les crédits suivraient tout naturellement.

## **ASPECTS DE LA PROBLEMATIQUE DE LA FORMATION PERMANENTE**

Cette partie du rapport souhaite mettre en lumière quelques aspects de la **problématique de la formation permanente en France**, à la lumière des réflexions et positions récentes, développées notamment à l'occasion du colloque annuel sur la formation continue universitaire, qui s'est tenu à Bordeaux les 27 et 28 mai 1999. La synthèse que nous faisons est sélective et se réfère toujours implicitement à l'objet de l'enquête confiée au groupe de travail mis en place par la Commission Européenne.

Les diagnostics portés sur l'état de la formation professionnelle, et notamment sur celle qui est offerte par l'université, varient selon les structures que représentent ceux qui se sont exprimés sur le sujet. Le patronat estime qu'il y a trop de diplômes professionnels en formation initiale ; la spécialisation n'est pas du ressort de la formation initiale ; elle doit se faire tout au long de la vie. Pour leur part, de nombreuses entreprises sont entrées dans une « gestion des compétences ». La motivation des salariés pour entrer dans la « **logique de compétences** » est cependant variable en fonction de leur niveau de qualification. Les personnes les moins qualifiées demandent très peu à suivre des formations ; en revanche, les employés des catégories intermédiaires qui envisagent une promotion au niveau cadre sont beaucoup plus demandeurs. Cette catégorie trouve satisfaction dans les formations dispensées par les universités ; les universités admettent qu'elles ne sont pas actuellement en mesure d'offrir des formations destinées aux publics les plus faiblement qualifiés. Les syndicats invitent pour leur part les universités à s'investir encore plus dans la voie de la validation des acquis professionnels, afin de pouvoir jouer un rôle conforme aux attentes des usagers potentiels de la formation permanente.

La décision de créer une **licence professionnelle** constitue un élément nouveau dans le contexte national. Ce nouveau diplôme est appelé à être une voie d'insertion professionnelle, ouverte en formation initiale et continue, s'appuyant sur le système de validation des acquis, associant les professionnels, comprenant un stage en entreprise, visant l'obtention de compétences élargies transversales, pouvant intégrer une dimension internationale, prête à convenir à un public diversifié.

Les modalités de validation des acquis professionnels ou autres et les modalités de contrôle des connaissances font l'objet de questions. Il est clair que la mise en place de ce diplôme pourrait être l'occasion d'innover et d'expérimenter l'usage d'un système de crédits. Cette dernière remarque n'a pas été formulée, mais résulte de l'analyse de l'auteur de ce rapport.

Quelles sont les pistes de **réforme dans le domaine de la certification et de la validation des acquis**. Aucune décision sérieuse dans ce domaine ne pourra s'imposer en ce domaine sans une concertation des principaux acteurs : partenaires sociaux et ministères valideurs. Une rencontre aura lieu au mois d'octobre 1999, en vue de prendre des mesures législatives et réglementaires au premier semestre 2000. Le Secrétariat d'Etat à la Formation Professionnelle a déjà indiqué de grands axes : étendre le dispositif actuel de validation des acquis à tous les diplômes et titres délivrés, concevoir un dispositif de certification des qualifications qui repose sur une certification publique et une certification paritaire, créer une instance interministérielle et interprofessionnelle chargée de la mise en œuvre du système de certification. Ce qui ressort de ces projets, c'est la **volonté d'aboutir à un système plus cohérent, plus simple et plus lisible de certification publique**, ainsi que celle de donner à la **validation des acquis** instaurée par la loi de 1992 une place moins marginale dans l'accès à une certification publique. Il est également constaté que les entreprises développent des démarches de gestion des compétences qui ne sont pas incompatibles avec l'existence d'un ensemble cohérent de qualifications, construites paritairement et articulées avec les différentes formes de certification.

Le Secrétariat d'Etat à la Formation professionnelle reconnaît que **le système actuel de certification et de validation des acquis a de nombreux défauts** : la multiplicité des diplômes et des titres nuit à leur lisibilité, les modalités de concertation entre les divers acteurs concernés manquent de cohérence, la logique de contenu est plus importante que la maîtrise des contenus. Il est donc proposé de **construire un système de certification des qualifications** reposant d'une part sur une certification multipartite (Etat/partenaires sociaux), délivrée sous le contrôle d'un ministère, d'autre part sur une certification paritaire élaborée au sein d'une branche professionnelle ou sur une base interprofessionnelle. L'accès à chacune de ces certifications peut être facilitée par la prise en compte, dans le cadre des acquis professionnels, d'autres formes de reconnaissance des savoirs, des savoir-faire et des compétences. Toute action tendant à proposer un système de crédits (qui paraît offrir un moyen pour atteindre les buts ainsi définis) devra donc faire l'objet d'une promotion auprès des différents acteurs engagés dans la vaste réflexion actuelle.

Les pouvoirs publics insistent également sur un autre principe : la **certification de la qualification professionnelle doit être indépendante des voies d'accès à cette qualification**. Tout individu doit pouvoir accéder à un titre ou diplôme par la formation initiale, par la formation continue ou par la validation des acquis. Cette diversité et la combinatoire possible qu'elle implique rend particulièrement pertinente la proposition qui pourrait être avancée d'adopter un système de crédits. Par ailleurs, pour les pouvoirs publics, l'instance qui crée la certification et /ou qui la délivre doit être distincte de celle qui prépare l'acquisition de la qualification. Il est souhaité qu'une instance unique à caractère interministériel et interprofessionnel soit créée pour mettre en œuvre ce système de certification de la qualification. Pour une grande partie de la formation permanente, il apparaît donc

qu'en France, il serait suicidaire de tenter d'introduire un système de crédits sans en passer par au moins, sur le principe, un accord des structures publiques et des partenaires sociaux concernés.

## **L'EDUCATION OUVERTE ET A DISTANCE**

Lors de la journée de réflexion organisée à Poitiers, au Centre National de l'Education à Distance (voir compte-rendu joint en annexe), les acteurs provenant de diverses structures, chacune à un titre ou un autre engagée dans l'EOD, les conclusions ont été de souhaiter voir se **poursuivre l'effort de la Commission en vue de proposer un modèle de système de crédits, dérivé de l'ECTS, même si lucidement et par expérience des obstacles ont été mentionnés.** Ceux-ci sont repris dans la synthèse qui précède. Cependant, l'existence d'un tel système est apparu comme plus vital encore dans ce domaine que dans celui de la formation en présentiel, notamment dans la perspective d'un élargissement et d'une diversification du recours à l'EOD. Ceci est vrai aussi bien pour le CNED que pour les responsables d'établissements (universités ou grandes écoles) qui veulent moderniser et amplifier le recours à ce mode de formation dans leurs établissements. La Direction de la Technologie au Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie a également un programme ambitieux où la réflexion sur l'EOD est couplée à celle sur l'extension de l'usage des technologies de l'information et de la communication. Un des aspects novateurs porte sur la création de nouveaux modes de vérification des connaissances et des compétences plus conformes aux objectifs des individus engagés dans un parcours d'éducation à travers la vie. Le CNED se dit prêt à poursuivre une réflexion commune avec des partenaires européens dans le cadre d'une éventuelle mise en place d'un projet initié par la Commission Européenne.

A la réunion de Bordeaux déjà évoquée plus haut, le représentant de la Délégation Générale à l'emploi et à la formation souligne lui aussi que le développement des TIC est un enjeu majeur de la formation continue pour les centres d'enseignement à distance des universités ou grandes écoles. Il souligne par ailleurs qu'avec la construction européenne, il n'est **pas réaliste de délivrer des diplômes qui n'ont pas d'équivalent européen.** Cette remarque ne peut que nous inciter à donner une dimension européenne accrue à nos formations et à la certification qui s'y attache par l'introduction d'un système qui en accroisse la transparence et la compatibilité.

## **CONCLUSION**

Un constat s'impose d'abord : il existe encore une distance entre formateurs et employeurs, malgré les efforts et les progrès réalisés. Or, rien ne pourra se faire si le système que nous envisageons de proposer n'est pas accepté par l'ensemble des acteurs.

Un deuxième constat est que le besoin existe d'un outil permettant une harmonisation au moins relative et une transférabilité tant sur le plan national que sur le plan européen. Certaines tentatives et projets réussis doivent nous encourager à poursuivre dans la voie d'une systématisation.

Un troisième constat est que la diversification des voies d'accès à la compétence et à la qualification, ainsi que celle des méthodes employées pour atteindre les objectifs de formation incite à



rechercher un outil permettant la création de passerelles, afin que chacun puisse emprunter le parcours qui lui convient le mieux dans le contenu, dans l'espace et dans le temps.

Enfin, eu égard à la diversité des acteurs concernés, il semble que la poursuite d'un projet comme celui que nous avons commencé de présenter ne pourra se faire dans SOCRATES 2 que dans le cadre élargi de Grundtvig et le LEONARDO.

## ***ANNEXE 1***

# **LA VALIDATION DES ACQUIS PROFESSIONNELS DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR EN FRANCE**

Dans le contexte socio-économique actuel, les périodes de transition entre la formation et l'emploi prennent une importance nouvelle, et font de la validation des acquis professionnels (V.A.P.) un enjeu fort qui intéresse la société dans son ensemble : universités, entreprises et individus.

Au coeur de l'articulation entre activité et formation, la VAP est un outil particulièrement adapté pour faciliter le retour des adultes à l'université, en leur permettant de réaliser des économies de parcours de formation. Elle constitue donc une clé privilégiée de la formation tout au long de la vie.

## **1 - LES TEXTES**

Quatre textes organisent la validation des acquis professionnels dans l'enseignement supérieur :

- \* le décret du 23 août 1985
- \* la loi du 20 juillet 1992
- \* le décret du 27 mars 1993
- \* l'arrêté du 27 mars 1993

Chacun de ces textes apporte sa contribution à une démarche qui vise à reconnaître la valeur formative des expériences professionnelles et sociales des individus et à leur permettre sur cette base d'accéder à un cursus de l'enseignement supérieur et de se voir décerner certains modules ou unités.

## **LE DECRET DE 1985**

Le décret de 1985 vise à permettre l'accès aux différents niveaux post-baccalauréat en prenant appui sur l'expérience professionnelle, les formations suivies par le candidat, quel qu'en ait été

le dispensateur, et « les connaissances et aptitudes acquises hors de tout système de formation » (art. 5). Il s'agit de porter une appréciation globale, à partir de l'analyse du cursus de formation et de l'itinéraire personnel et professionnel du candidat sur « les connaissances, les méthodes et le savoir-faire en fonction de la formation souhaitée » (art. 7).

## LA LOI DE 1992 ET LE DECRET DE 1993

La loi de 1992 et le décret de 1993 introduisent une dimension nouvelle importante : la possibilité par la validation de délivrer une partie, qui peut être significative, du diplôme ( à la limite toutes les unités moins une). « Les acquis professionnels pourront être pris en compte pour justifier d'une part les connaissances et les aptitudes exigées pour l'obtention d'un diplôme de l'enseignement supérieur » ( art.1 – I de la loi) ; « les études, les expériences professionnelles ou les acquis professionnels peuvent être validés pour remplacer une partie des épreuves conduisant à la délivrance de certains diplômes ou titres professionnels » ( art. 1 – IV de la loi ).

### ***L'ARRETE DU 27 MARS 1993***

L'arrêté du 27 mars 1993 précise les modalités de constitution du dossier de validation des acquis ainsi que son contenu.

## **2 – LES DISPOSITIONS DES TEXTES**

### ***QUI PEUT DEMANDER LA VALIDATION DE SES ACQUIS PROFESSIONNELS ?***

Le décret de 1985 prévoit que les candidats non-titulaires du baccalauréat doivent avoir interrompu leur formation initiale depuis au moins 2 ans et 3 ans en cas d'échec, et être âgés de 20 ans au moins. Le diplôme national intitulé Diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires (D.A.E.U.) rentre dans ce cadre.

Le décret de 1993 n'est applicable qu'aux personnes qui peuvent justifier de 5 années d'activité professionnelle, en continu ou non, en rapport avec l'objet de la demande. Ne sont pas pris en compte les stages intégrés à la formation initiale.

### ***LE DOSSIER DE DEMANDE DE VALIDATION***

Le décret de 93 introduit des exigences nouvelles par rapport au décret de 85 qui était très « libéral ».

Le décret de 85 permet au candidat de déposer autant de dossiers qu'il souhaite, la liste des pièces à fournir ainsi que la date de dépôt sont définies par chaque responsable de formation ou par chaque établissement.

Le décret de 93 impose le dépôt d'une seule demande par an, pour le diplôme donné et dans un seul établissement. La teneur du dossier et la date de dépôt sont fixées annuellement, pour chaque formation, par l'établissement. La demande doit préciser le diplôme postulé et les dispenses d'épreuves souhaitées. C'est-à-dire que c'est au candidat de juger des parties de diplôme qu'il estime avoir acquises par son expérience professionnelle.

## **LES INSTANCES**

Le décret de 1985 précise que la décision de validation est prise par le Président sur proposition de Commissions pédagogiques. Le Président fixe le nombre de Commissions pédagogiques, leur composition ainsi que leur mode de fonctionnement, après avis du Conseil des Etudes et de la Vie Universitaire. Il en désigne les membres.

Chaque Commission pédagogique est présidée par un professeur d'Université. Elle doit comprendre au moins deux enseignants-chercheurs de la formation et un enseignant-chercheur ayant des activités en formation continue. La participation de professionnels est obligatoire quand ils assurent plus de 30% des enseignements.

La décision de validation selon le décret de 1993 est prise, non plus par une Commission, mais par un jury. Le président nomme pour chaque formation et pour une durée de 2 ans les membres du jury et désigne le président parmi les professeurs, sauf dérogation entérinée par le Conseil Scientifique.

Ces jurys comprennent de façon obligatoire des professionnels, mais ils ne peuvent être en majorité. Ceux-ci doivent avoir exercé des activités professionnelles dans les domaines de formation concernés par la validation et posséder le diplôme postulé ou avoir exercé des activités de niveau correspondants, ou avoir participé à l'enseignement conduisant au diplôme.

Ne peuvent participer aux délibérations des jurys les personnes appartenant à l'unité de production ou au service du candidat.

## **LA PROCEDURE DE VALIDATION**

Pour le décret de 1985 « la procédure de validation permet d'apprécier les connaissances, les méthodes et les savoir-faire du candidat en fonction de la formation qu'il souhaite suivre ». Il est question de dossier, d'entretien et de vérification éventuelle des connaissances. La décision est prononcée par le président.

Dans le décret de 1993, c'est le jury qui procède à l'examen du dossier. Il peut décider d'entendre le candidat. Il vérifie, pour les parties de diplômes pour lesquelles il veut faire jouer la

validation, si les acquis professionnels correspondent au niveau des connaissances et des aptitudes requises. Le jury fait connaître au président sa décision. Celle-ci est transmise au jury compétent pour délivrer le diplôme.

### **3 - DEUX APPROCHES COMPLEMENTAIRES MAIS DIFFERENTES :**

#### **RECONNAISSANCE/VALIDATION**

**L'ensemble de ces textes propose deux approches complémentaires mais différentes de validation des acquis.**

**Le décret de 85 cherche à apprécier de façon globale les acquis du candidat et à l'insérer dans la formation qui correspond le mieux à sa trajectoire personnelle et professionnelle. Il est question d'orientation (art. 10), d'assortir la décision de propositions (par exemple de remise à niveau) ou de conseils. Il permet également d'accorder des dispenses d'épreuve, mais sans que cela donne lieu à la délivrance d'unités ou de parties de diplômes.**

**La loi de 92 et le décret de 93 introduisent la possibilité de prendre en compte les acquis du candidat pour justifier d'une partie des connaissances et aptitudes exigées pour l'obtention du diplôme. Il s'agit de délivrer cette fois des parties de diplômes qui seront réputées définitivement acquises.**

**Le décret de 85 propose de prendre en compte dans les procédures de validation l'ensemble des acquis, qu'ils soient personnels ou professionnels, et toutes les formations suivies. Le décret de 1993 est plus restrictif, il insiste surtout sur les acquis professionnels et sur les formations suivies, stages effectués et diplômes obtenus. Cependant, l'arrêté de 1993 précise que les activités extra-professionnelles peuvent être incluses dans le dossier.**

En bref, l'ensemble de ces textes institue la distinction entre reconnaissance (1985) et validation (1992-93)

## **PERSPECTIVES ET CONCLUSION**

Ce dispositif pose un problème relativement nouveau pour l'enseignement supérieur.

Peut-on accepter que du savoir acquis ailleurs ait valeur à l'Université ?

Telle est la problématique posée à l'Université par l'ensemble de ces textes, tel est aussi le défi qui lui est lancé.

Toutefois, les évolutions socio-politiques et économiques en cours poussent l'Université à s'engager toujours plus avant dans cette voie.

En effet, si la V.A.P. pour l'attribution d'une partie de diplôme est désormais en vigueur, en revanche, il n'existe pas encore d'équivalence universitaire des Certificats de Qualification Professionnelle, ni des titres homologués. La question se pose donc d'un rapprochement et d'une articulation entre V.A.P. et diplômes, V.A.P. et C.Q.P., V.A.P. et titres homologués.

« Les premiers chantiers à ouvrir viseront à développer l'accès à TOUS les diplômes et titres professionnels par la validation des acquis et articuler diplômes et titres d'Etat avec les autres certificats de qualification et de compétences, en favorisant la prise en compte de ces dernières pour l'acquisition d'un titre ou d'un diplôme » (page 19 du rapport sur la Formation Professionnelle de Madame Nicole PERY – Mai 1999)

Le Secrétariat d'Etat à la Formation Professionnelle affirme donc comme prioritaire le chantier de l'extension de la V.A.P. aux Certificats de Qualification Professionnelle et aux titres homologués.

En favorisant les allers et retours entre la formation et l'emploi, la validation des acquis professionnels doit contribuer à la traduction concrète du principe de formation tout au long de la vie qui est appelé à se substituer progressivement, à la conception encore trop bipolaire (formation initiale, formation continue) de la mission d'enseignement des établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

## **Appendix 4.9 – Greece**

(Volker Gehmlich – Fachhochschule Osnabrück)

# Report on a potential ECTS Extension in GREECE

## **1 Overview**

The following report is based on personal visits to four institutions (traditional universities and Technological Education Institutes), and exchange of information with the respective Counsellor in Greece. All institutions of higher education in Greece received the ECTS-questionnaire but not a single one was returned. This was explained with the specific situation in Greece. Many institutions seem to believe that the decision can only be taken at the political level in Greece. The attempt to arrange for a meeting with the respective Minister, Prof. Kladis, did not work out. There was no response either. So, the following report is nothing but a reflection on the information received and the impressions gained.

## **11 Overall Situation**

The situation in Greece is somewhat difficult concerning the application of ECTS as a transfer system. On the one hand all institutions of higher education use a credit accumulation system by law, on the other hand this system does not allow for any transfer of credits from one institution to another within the country. This means that students who passed a subject at an institution have to resit if they move to another to continue their studies. As a consequence of this mobility hardly occurs between Greek institutions. It also has to be stressed that the Greek accumulation system has its limits. The pure accumulation is not enough; there is always a final examination at the very end of the study-programmes.

The application of ECTS helps and at the same time hampers Greek institutions and students. First of all it has to be noted that Greek students go abroad, that is that they are mobile within the EU-programme on the basis of ECTS. ECTS in fact makes mobility possible in Greece at all. On paper the Greek institutions accept the credits having been achieved by Greek students abroad. It has to be noted, however, that Greek students see this differently. Most times they will work on their dissertation or on projects when being abroad (same as incoming students). If respective examinations are due they normally go home to take them or they have to sit for them when they get back. This is particularly true as concerns the finals.

Another fact seems to be that the principles of ECTS are not necessarily regarded as having to be adhered to, or, there are still some basic misconceptions. The problems mainly occur as regards the calculation of credits. As the Greek system is not based on working hours, some Greek institutions seem to allocate credits for programmes foreign students attend in a rather volatile way. They seem to be caught in their own system which does not encourage mobility and ECTS which fosters mobility.

The Greek credit system is based on teaching hours: 1 teaching hour corresponds to one credit per week and semester. The number of credits may vary according to the type of contact hour. A seminar, e.g., carries 1 credit per hour, but laboratory work may be worth 0,5

credit only. Per term about 20 credits can be achieved. Weight factors are also used depending on the subject for the final degree. Within the TEIs there is one common system.

The "Greek credits" are converted into "ECTS credits" according to the imagined workload of a course. How many credits are awarded depends very much on the personal impression of the teacher (or co-ordinator) of the difficulty of a given subject.

## **Appendix 4.10 - Italy**

(Maria Sticchi-Damiani – Luiss)

### *THE QUESTIONNAIRE*

#### General information

Report by Maria Sticchi- Damiani,

- Associate Professor of English at LUISS Guido Carli, Rome
- Member of the Commission for International Cooperation of the Italian Ministry for University and Research,
- Member of the Socrates-Erasmus Sub-Committee
- ECTS Counsellor

#### Experts consulted:

- Dott.ssa Cristiana Alfonsi – CRUI (Conference of Rectors of Italian Universities), Rome
- Dott.ssa Antonella Cammisa – MURST (Ministry for Education and Research)
- Dott.ssa Gabriella Di Francesco – ISFOL (Institute for the Development of Vocational

#### Training

- of workers), Rome
- Prof. Giuseppe Ronsisvalle – University of Catania

#### Dates and place of meetings:

- April, 27, 1999, Rome
- May 5, 1999, Rome

#### ***B. Questions on your national/regional educational system:***

The Italian education system has recently introduced the concept of credits in all sectors (higher education, higher secondary education, vocational education/training, professional training). Credits can be used both for credit transfer and for credit accumulation. Methods of implementation are still being discussed and actual implementation has only started in secondary school.

Higher Education Institutions have adopted ECTS as a national credit system. In vocational education/training and professional training, credits are based on competencies rather than on workload. The two criteria do not seem to be incompatible but rather complementary with each other.

#### ***C. Problems associated with the introduction of a European credit accumulation framework***

In the light of the existing legislation I do not think there are any legal barriers in Italy for the development of a European credit accumulation framework. The key issue for all countries is agreeing on principles and methods. In Italy principles like transparency, flexibility and agreement have already been accepted and will not be questioned; methods, however, are still being debated at national level, so they could easily be debated at European level as well. In the country, moreover, there is widespread interest in moving ahead along European lines.

There are no formal obstacles to the extension of a European credit system to vocational education, professional training and lifelong learning (even in part time and distance education), only the difficulties arising from introducing something totally new that requires both technical adjustments and cultural change.



*Advantages of creating a European credit accumulation framework:*

A European credit accumulation framework would increase the transparency of national systems, encourage flexibility in the development of joint curricula and facilitate agreements for the mobility of learners not only between educational sectors in the same country but also between those of different countries. In order to serve a wider range of purposes, however, the present ECTS system should consider the objective of the educational programme/module concerned (type and level of the competence to be acquired) in addition to the effort required to complete it (workload).

As for the simple credit model outlined in the introductory paper, I agree with the principles of transparency, flexibility and agreement. I think, moreover, that, while respecting the educational autonomy of countries/institutions, some efforts should be made to develop a common language for the classification of competencies, in order to facilitate mutual understanding. The notion of level should be introduced as soon as possible.

The success of the model will depend on the willingness of national systems to accept a common framework of principles and methods for the description of their programmes and the mobility of learners.

*D. Conclusion:*

**It would be difficult to envisage a European system that did not require some convergence at national/institutional level. Like ECTS, a more comprehensive European credit system should be developed on a voluntary basis, first in a pilot project and then with the participation of all countries/institutions interested. The experience with ECTS and the Diploma Supplement has shown that countries/institutions may first resist to change but then will slowly adjust to what facilitates mutual understanding and mobility. The Bologna declaration is an indication of the political support offered by European governments to such a process.**

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. DEVELOPMENTS IN ITALIAN EDUCATION

The whole educational system in Italy is undergoing a radical reform that has introduced the concept of credits in all sectors (higher education, higher secondary education, vocational education and professional training) and is now discussing the methods of implementation of the system.

In particular:

#### Higher Education

The reform is based on general guidelines by the Ministry of University and Research and on autonomous choices by HE Institutions. After two introductory documents (Note di indirizzo) published last year, on March 19 1999 a framework decree was published by the Ministry (Schema di regolamento in materia di autonomia didattica di atenei) that is presently going through a formal consultation process and will be shortly finalized.

The decree provides for the introduction of a national credit system that is totally in line with ECTS. Like in ECTS, the allocation of academic credits is based on students' workload, that includes all the learning activities required to complete a given course unit. The decree also provides for the recognition of credits gained in other educational/training environments, thus opening up to the integration of different systems through the instrument of credits.

#### Higher Secondary Education

The reform is based on recent legislation:

- Legge quadro in materia di riordino dei cicli di istruzione (Framework Law for the reorganization of education cycles), 4 July 1997, promoted by the Ministry of Education and University;
- Regolamento per la disciplina degli esami di stato conclusivi dei corsi di studio di istruzione secondaria superiore (Norms for the final national exam in higher secondary education), May 1998, promoted by the Ministry of Education.

It introduces the concept of 'credito scolastico' (course-based) and 'credito formativo' (experience-based), that can account for up to a maximum of 20% (for crediti scolastici) and 5% (for crediti formativi) of the points leading to the final diploma.

'Crediti formativi' are defined as "a value assigned to any qualified experience in education, art and sport, of professional training, work or volunteer service, leading to competencies that may be considered relevant to the programme of study for which the final qualification is pursued". Credits are recognized by the Board of examiners responsible for awarding the qualification.

The system has been implemented for the first time in 1999.

#### Vocational Education and Professional Training

The reform is based on

Agreements between the government and social parties:

- Accordo per il lavoro tra Governo e parti sociali (Labour agreement), 1996;
- Patto sociale per lo sviluppo e l'occupazione (Social pact for development and employment), 22 dic. 1998;

and legislation:

- Law 197 of 1997 'Norme in materia di promozione dell'occupazione (Norms for the promotion of employment). Art 17: Riordino della formazione professionale (Reorganization of vocational education and professional training);
- Decreti applicativi for Art. 16,17,18 of Law 196/1997, 1998.

The reform is promoted by the Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the Ministries of Education and University&Research, regions and social parties, and with the operational support of ISFOL (Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers).

One of the objectives of the reform is promoting a more integrated educational/training system through the introduction of a flexible credit accumulation system based on competencies (crediti formativi individuali). Such integrated system (vocational education, professional training, work) requires

common criteria for the transfer and accumulation of credits. Credits are defined as a “value assigned to an educational/training unit or to a work experience, which certifies an individually acquired competency and can be accumulated for recognition and further use within the educational/ training system”. The meaning of ‘value’ and ‘unit/experience’ needs further clarification. Competencies are provisionally classified as ‘basic, technical/professional and horizontal’.

The reform in vocational education and professional training is being implemented through the FIS project ( *Formazione tecnica-professionale superiore integrata*), which aims to develop a shared system of training standards at national level, as well as a system of credit accumulation at national and possibly at European level, leading to the integration of different educational/training sectors in Italy and possibly in Europe. The credits gained within the FIS framework can be flexibly used for continuation of studies in the Universities which have agreed to recognize them, for recognition of professional qualifications of second level by the Regions, for further professional training, and for entry into the labour market. Again, a basic distinction is made between ‘credito didattico’ (learning by studying ) and ‘credito formativo’ (learning by doing).

## 2. THE CREDITS PROJECT

It is a project funded by the Toscana Region with the participation of the following partners:

- The Universities of Basilicata, Catania, Firenze, Pisa, Siena;
- CRUI (the Conference of Rectors of Italian Universities);
- ISFOL ( Institute for the Development of Vocational Training of Workers);
- Confindustria (Confederation of Italian industries);
- Sindacati confederali (Confederation of Unions);
- Conferenza Stato-Regioni (State-Regions Conference)

The project is attempting to address the problems raised by the development of a credit accumulation system. In particular, the project has highlighted the following issues as requiring further investigation and field testing:

- A common language should be developed for the classification of competencies acquired in all educational/training sectors. The present ISFOL classification (basic, technical-professional, horizontal) should be extended to include more specific university competencies.
- A method should be devised for the description of overall competencies acquired in full educational/training programmes, and for the association of single educational units/work experiences with specific competencies;
- Credits should be awarded by the system that is responsible for developing the competencies to be certified. Credits should be recognized by the system that is responsible for the educational /training programme for which the credits will be used;
- Awarding credits should be intended as certifying the acquisition of a specific level of competencies in a given system, whereas recognition of credits should be intended as certifying that those competencies correspond to a specific set of competencies that can be acquired in another system. Correspondences between competencies/credits can be established at national/regional/institutional levels or agreed on an ad hoc basis;
- The quality/quantity of credits recognized at entry of an educational /training programme should be consistent with the quality/quantity of credits awarded at the end of the programme;
- Recognition of credits could be internal (for the personalization and possible abbreviation of the educational/training programme within the same subsystem) or external (for the continuation in another subsystem or for entry into the labour market). External recognition should require the involvement of the systems which will recognize the credits already at the planning stage, in order to guarantee a joint planning of the educational/training path and adequate bridges between the systems;
- A credit system based on competencies (used in vocational education/training) should be compatible with a credit system based on workload (used in higher education). The second approach (ECTS) should not be viewed as contradicting the first, but rather as enriching it, because it would combine the objective of the educational/training experience (the competence to be acquired) with the effort required to acquire it (time needed).

## REFERENCES

- F. Butera, La formazione tecnica-professionale superiore integrata, Roma, 9 luglio 1998;
- ISFOL- Progetto di certificazione (C.Alfonsi, F.Baiardi, G. Di Francesco), Documento di lavoro del progetto Credits. Elementi utili per l'attivazione/sperimentazione di un dispositivo di riconoscimento dei crediti, Roma, 5 febbraio 1999;
- Documento ISFOL/CEDE, Certificazione e crediti formativi: una panoramica nazionale su principi, modelli e dispositivi, Roma, 18 febbraio 1999;
- S. Michelotti – R. Schmidt, Osservazioni sul documento di lavoro dell'ISFOL per il progetto Credits, Firenze, 1 marzo 1999;
- Documento di lavoro del gruppo tecnico sulle modalità di certificazione e di riconoscimento dei crediti nei percorsi IFTS, Roma, 26 marzo 1999.

**Appendix 4.11 - Netherlands**  
(Alex von Balluseck – NUFFIC)

*Review of Dutch reactions to the possibilities of*

*a) extending ECTS to other sectors of education than higher education*

*and*

*b) developing ECTS in to an accumulation system*

Compiled by Nuffic

September 1999

## Table of Content

### **1. Introduction**

**1.1 Objective**

**1.2 Focus**

**1.3 Method**

**1.4 Structure of this report**

### **2. Organisations contacted**

**2.1 Regular higher education**

**2.2 Post-experience/ODL**

**2.3 International education**

**2.4 Professional and Adult education**

### **3. Dutch national education system**

**3.1 The Dutch Higher Education System**

**3.2 Use of credits in Dutch higher education**

### **4. (Possible) extension of ECTS towards other sectors of education, including the use of ECTS as an accumulation system**

### **5. Conclusions**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Objective

The objective of the project (for the Netherlands) was to gather opinions on the further development of ECTS as a system for both transfer and accumulation, and on the extension of ECTS to other sectors of education besides higher education; e.g. professional training and adult education, open and distance learning, post-experience learning.

### 1.2 Focus

The focus is on **higher education** and to some extent on professional and adult education (the so called *BVE*-sector) in the Netherlands. Different types, levels and modes of study programmes offered within the higher education sector will be included:

1. *Regular study programmes* offered by universities and universities of professional education (the *hogescholen*)  
Since the implementation of the Higher Education and Research Act (*WHW*) in 1993, the study load of the regular higher education study programmes offered by universities and universities of professional education is quantified by means of credit points ('*studiepunten*'). One credit point represents one week of full-time study; that is 40 hours including contact hours, laboratory and independent work. As the academic year consists of 42 weeks, one year of full-time study equals 42 credit points. The national credit point system is based on the same principles as ECTS.
2. *Post-experience study programmes* offered by both type of institutions (e.g. Master's programmes). These courses might be offered on-line or in a more traditional mode. In most of these courses the academic workload is calculated in contact hours, while the amount of self-study has not been quantified.
3. *International education* (a special type of post-experience education, designed for international students).  
The system of international education was established in the early 1950's. There are currently some 20 international education institutions offering courses to an average of 3,000 students per year. Courses are given in a wide variety of fields, such as science and technology, agriculture or social sciences. Also the duration of the courses vary, lasting anywhere from a few weeks to two years. Some of the international education institutions work 'under the umbrella of an university', most are independent but maintain close ties with universities, industry and research centres. The study load is in most cases expressed in contact hours. Transparency on the content and workload is very important to foster the international recognition of the credential(s) awarded.

As far as **professional training and adult education** is concerned, the *BVE*-sector ('*beroepsonderwijs en volwassenen educatie*') does not have a national credit point system yet. However, study load is quantified in hours. One week of study represents 40 study hours and one year represents 40 study weeks (1600 study hours).

### 1.3 Method

Information for this 'light touch review', carried out in order to get reactions on the subject from Dutch stakeholders, was gathered by sending out letters (with specific questions on the topic) to the various Dutch target groups concerned .

Two types of letters were sent out. The first type was sent to all the 'overall representing organisations' / umbrella organisations or in Dutch 'de koepels' (see below).

A (slightly) different letter was sent to a large number of individual higher education institutions through the different networks in which they are organised and /or participate.

In addition, numerous talks and discussions took place (in person, by phone, by e-mail or in person) with people contacted by means of the letters indicated above.

#### 1.4 Structure of this report

This report follows as much as possible the structure of the 'questionnaire' as described in the information package. The report gives a description of the organisations contacted in the different fields of education. Part 3 gives an brief outlook on the use of credit points in the Netherlands. Part 4 describes the individual answers of the various organisations and institutions that were approached. The last chapter draws some 'general' conclusions from the preceding sections and gives touches upon the subject of how to (possibly) proceed with ECTS and accumulation from a Dutch perspective.

## **2. Organisations contacted**

Besides the Ministry of Education a number of organisations has been contacted in the Netherlands. In doing so, emphasis was laid on the so-called 'koepels'. The 'koepels' are organisations representing a number of similar organisations, for example the Dutch universities are represented by the VSNU ('Association of Universities in the Netherlands').

Overview of the organisations contacted, with a brief description of what they are:

### **2.1 Regular higher education**

**Ministry of Education, Culture and Science** (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen)

- Directorate for Scientific Education (responsible for scientific education at the universities)
- Directorate for Higher Professional Education (responsible for higher professional education at the universities of professional education, the 'hogescholen')

**Inspectorate for Higher Education** (Inspectie Hoger Onderwijs)

The inspectorate's main function is to guard and promote quality in education at Dutch higher education institutions. It does so by monitoring the quality assurance system in the Netherlands. It reports to the institutions themselves and to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences.

**VSNU** (Vereniging van Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten)

The VSNU, the 'Association of Universities in the Netherlands', looks after the interests of the Dutch universities towards the government and other stakeholders. It also acts as an employers organisation and develops activities in a number of areas such as quality control, management development, etc.



### **HBO-raad** (Raad voor het Hoger Beroepsonderwijs)

The HBO-raad, the 'Association of Universities of Professional Education', is the organisation representing the 'hogescholen' or universities of professional education. The main goals of the HBO-raad are the development of higher vocational education in relation to society and collective representation.

### **Departments for International Affairs of the higher education institutions (COI and HIB networks)**

Representatives of the departments for International Affairs of both universities and universities of professional education meet regularly through respectively the 'Committee for Consultation regarding Internationalisation' (COI) and the International Relations Forum for 'Hogescholen' (HIB).

### **Socrates co-ordinators' network**

Every Dutch Socrates co-ordinator participates in a network.

### **Admissions officers (foreign students) / student advisors (KBS)**

Admission officers / student advisors are organised in a network called KBS ('Kommissie Buitenlandse Studerenden').

## **2.2 Post-experience / ODL**

### **DVC**

The Dutch Validation Council was established to review the quality of Dutch master's programmes on a voluntary basis. These master's programmes are a type of post-experience education. The council only validates master's programmes which can be followed after a bachelor's degree.

### **Open University** (Open Universiteit)

The Open University is the main distance education institution in the Netherlands providing courses at university level for everyone over the age of eighteen. In 18 study centres around the country, students can take exams. Great importance is attached to the use ICT in teaching and teaching support.

## **2.3 International education**

### **FION**

The 'Federation of Institutes For International Education in the Netherlands (FION), represents institutes for higher international education in the Netherlands and abroad, stimulates co-operation between institutes, co-ordinates the joint activities of the institutes for International Education and develops a common quality policy and also the instruments to control this quality. The IE institutes focus on development orientated courses.

**COO** (Commissie voor Overleg over Ontwikkelingssamenwerking)

Representatives of the departments for International Affairs of both universities and universities of professional education meet regularly through the 'Committee for Consultation regarding Development Cooperation' (COO), discussing issues concerning higher education in developing countries.

## **2.4 Professional and Adult education**

**COLO** (Vereniging landelijke Organen Beroepsonderwijs)

The 'Association of and for the National Bodies for Vocational Training' (COLO) promotes the common national and international interests of all 22 national bodies. Amongst the core activities of COLO are the promotion of the internationalisation of vocational training, and the comparison of qualifications and certificates.

In addition, both COLO and the national bodies are closely involved in international developments in vocational training.

**BVE-raad** (Raad voor Beroeps- en Volwassenen Educatie)

The BVE-raad is the national organisation which looks after the interest of all organisations in the field of vocational and adult education.

**CINOP** (Centrum voor Innovatie van Opleidingen)

The 'Centre for Innovation in Education' (CINOP) is a consulting bureau, participating in many national and international education projects / research activities mainly in vocational education.

## **3. Dutch national education system**

### **3.1 The Dutch Higher Education System**

The education system in the Netherlands is, with certain important exceptions, governed at all levels by national legislation. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for the implementation of educational legislation for most types of education, except for study programmes in the fields of health care and agriculture, which are governed by the competent ministries. There is an increasing trend at all levels of education towards fewer rules and

regulations from the national government, whose primary role is to provide a framework regarding educational objectives, admissions requirements and funding, within which institutions operate.

### Higher Education

The Netherlands has a binary system of higher education, which includes wetenschappelijk onderwijs (WO), offered by universities, and hoger beroepsonderwijs (HBO), offered by hogescholen, or universities of professional education. There are 13 universities in the Netherlands, including 1 agricultural university and 3 universities offering programmes in engineering and natural sciences. There are approximately 65 universities of professional education, which prepare students for particular professions and tend to be more practically oriented than traditional universities, where the emphasis is on theory and the generation of knowledge through research. In addition, there is an Open University, offering both university and HBO programmes. The higher education system also includes a third branch known as internationaal onderwijs (IO), or international education. IO offers advanced training courses primarily to foreign students, the emphasis of which may be either on research or the practical application of knowledge.

### University Education (WO)

University Education Dutch universities provide education and conduct research in a wide range of disciplines including language and culture, behaviour and society, economics, law, medical and health sciences, natural sciences, engineering, and agriculture. Initial study programmes last four years in most fields, but five years in engineering, specific technical sciences and agriculture, at the end of which the doctoraal getuigschrift or doctoraal degree is awarded. Integrated study programmes in medical and health sciences, last either five years (dentistry), or six years (medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine). The first year of every programme is referred to as the propedeuse, which provides students with introductory courses fundamental to the discipline in question. The propedeuse must be successfully completed before a student may continue in the remaining three or four years of the programme. In addition to lectures, seminars, and independent study, a required component of every doctoraal programme is training in research methodology and the completion of a thesis. Graduates of doctoraal programmes are permitted by law to use a particular title, depending on the discipline.

Graduates in engineering and technology and agriculture and the natural environment receive the title of ingenieur, abbreviated to ir. Graduates in law obtain the title of meester, abbreviated to mr. Graduates in all other disciplines obtain the title of doctorandus, abbreviated to drs. Alternatively, all graduates have the right to use the title of Master. Graduates are eligible for admission to the doctorate. All universities in the Netherlands award the country's highest academic degree, the doctoraat, successful completion of which entitles use of the title doctor, abbreviated to dr. The process by which a doctorate is obtained is referred to as the promotie. The doctorate is primarily a research degree, for which a dissertation must be researched, written and publicly defended. The minimum amount of time required to complete a doctorate is 4 years.

### Higher Professional Education (HBO)

Dutch universities of professional education prepare students for a wide variety of careers in seven sectors: agriculture, engineering and technology, economics and business administration, health care, fine and performing arts, education/teacher training and social welfare. Initial study programmes last 4 years, at the end of which the Getuigschrift Hoger Beroepsonderwijs or HBO degree is awarded. The first year of every programme is referred to as the propedeuse, which provides students with introductory courses fundamental to the discipline in question. The propedeuse must be successfully completed before a student may continue in the remaining three years of the programme. In addition to lectures, seminars, and independent study, students are required to complete an internship or work placement (stage) which takes up most of the third year of study, as well as aac aorojost a307.7(t)-sirtudy

### 3.2.2 Credit transfer

ECTS is widely used in Dutch higher education for the purpose of international exchange. About 60 Dutch higher education institutions have received subsidy from the European Commission to start implementing the system. In addition there are several institutions that have started using the system without requesting subsidy.

Recently research was carried out by Nuffic (Scholten/Bremer, 1999), to investigate the experiences of institutions and students on the use of ECTS. The research showed that half of the students are dissatisfied with the information obtained before going abroad and indicated that it was insufficient to prepare adequately. The areas most often mentioned are organizational matters and the level of a course and the method of instruction. These are all matters that should be addressed in an ECTS study guide. However, the answers received showed that only a few students used or had access to an ECTS study guide. More extensive use of ECTS and its information package could solve information problems

In the institutions, 37% has made policy on ECTS on a central level. Foreign students are asked in 63% of the cases to produce a study plan.

[Source: A. Scholten / L. Bremer, (1999) *'Recognition of credits in the framework of Socrates' Erkennung van studiepunten in Socrates*. Nuffic Research report.

Bremer L and Scholten A (1999). Recognition of Credits in the Framework of Socrates. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 3, (2), 89-102.]

See also Chapter 4.

### 3.2.3 Professional and Vocational education

The main difference with higher education is the large involvement of the trade and industry in this type of education. This involvement has a legal basis and assures a close match between the needs of the industry and the contents of curricula.

In the sector of vocational education a qualification structure was introduced. Over 700 different qualifications exist at four levels. Each qualification is based on partial qualifications, themselves divided into attainment targets. For each partial qualification a number of credits is awarded.

The levels are: 1. assistant; 2. basic employee; 3. skilled professional; 4. specialist/middle manager.

### 3.2.4 Lifelong learning

Thoughts on the accreditation and recognition of prior learning were expressed for the first time in a report of the Ministry of Education in 1993, entitled *'Blijvend Leren'* (Continue Learning). An Advisory Committee was set up to see whether such a scheme was desirable and possible. In 1994, a favourable recommendation was given. The Committee believed employers, trade unions, educational institutions, manpower services and the government

could benefit from such a scheme, which could enhance the transparency of the labour and training market, and thus ensure a better match between supply and demand. This could lead to more efficient learning pathways.

The development of a national qualification structure with national standards for the whole sector of vocational training and adult education (BE-sector) was an important prerequisite. This structure was implemented in 1996 and contains four levels within the BE-sector and one within higher education.

In the meantime various pilot projects have been executed to test and implement procedures for the accreditation of prior learning (APL). Most of these projects have been carried out in the BVE-sector, but more and more attention is being paid to APL-procedure in higher education as well.

### 3.2.5 International education (IE)

In the field of international education, there is no consensus on a credit system. Most institutions use the system as is used in regular higher education (i.e. the national 'studiepunten' system, see 3.2). Others find this system not suitable for their specific type of education.

For example, the 'International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences' (ITC) uses a credit system, whereby a credit is made up of 48 credit hours of study activities; and there are 48 weeks in a study year. [Source: Article (p.35) in magazine 'Onderzoek van Onderwijs', 1998, Ms. Ineke ten Dam,

*'Studielast en studiepunten in het internationaal onderwijs']*

Although this makes it more difficult to implement the ECTS system as a whole, ITC also plans to implement ECTS in its new programmes. Some IE institutions are (partly) already implementing ECTS.

## **4. (Possible) extension of ECTS towards other sectors of education, including the use of ECTS as an accumulation system**

### 4.1 Higher education

**Ministry of Education, Culture and Science** (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen)

Both directorates of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (the Directorate for Scientific Education and the Directorate for Higher Professional Education) responded to the Nuffic letter.

The Directorate for Scientific Education reacted as follows (in translation):

“The ministry regards ECTS as an important tool to stimulate international student mobility. The implementation of ECTS at universities is done on a voluntary basis; however, the Directorate of the Ministry is of the opinion that the implementation is a fact in a large number of institutions already.”

“In accordance with the opinion of the VSNU (see below), the Directorate is of the opinion that with today’s implementation practice for ECTS, nothing can be said about the suitability of ECTS as an accumulation system. Considering the principles and the objectives of ECTS, it was not designed as an accumulation system, but as a system to convert credit points to the value of the home credit point system as used within the study programme followed by the student.”

“With regard to the extension of the ECTS implementation towards other education sectors, [the Directorate] follows the opinion expressed by the VSNU in its reaction.”

The Directorate for Higher Professional Education reacted as follows (in translation):

“...ECTS is a system for the recognition of study credits, on the basis of developed standards between Dutch and foreign higher education institutions. The implementation of ECTS at universities for professional education is done on a voluntary basis”.

“ECTS can, given the objectives of the system, not simply be used as an accumulation system. Accumulation means that respective educational units (‘credits’) are being added up to a coherent ‘entity’ leading to a certificate. As mentioned before, ECTS is nothing more than a conversion system for credit points.

The Dutch credit point system and the underlying education system will always form the basis for the Dutch diploma awarded.”

“Extension of ECTS, in the existing form, towards other parts of education is, in our opinion, only desirable, provided that somehow the divisions between different educational levels are closely guarded. If not, extension will only lead to confusion, because the distinction between higher education and other levels of education will get blurred. ECTS does not say anything about the kind of education and the level thereof.”

**Inspectorate for Higher Education** (Inspectie Hoger Onderwijs)

No reaction was received (yet).

**VSNU** (Vereniging van Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten)

The VSNU reacted as follows (in translation):

“ECTS was developed for higher education. ECTS was designed as a transfer system for study credit points. This transfer function of ECTS is at the moment widely used by Dutch universities. Most universities mention in their study guides not only [Dutch] study credit points, but also the equivalence in ECTS credits. This does not mean that ECTS can also be

used as an accumulation system. Accumulation means that respective educational units ('credits') are being added up to a coherent 'entity' , which one can conclude with a title, certificate or diploma.”

“[The VSNU] concludes that in the light of experiences with ECTS so far, there is not yet a basis for extending ECTS towards other sectors of education. This would not increase the



with the Dutch national study point system (Higher Education and Research Act (*WHW*) and the ECTS systematics as well. Also some of the study guides of universities of professional education indicate the study load in both systems.”

### **Higher Education Institutions**

Nuffic also received reactions a number of the ‘individual’ universities; some of them reacted in addition to the overall reaction of the ‘koepels’ representing them. The reactions of the ‘individual’ institutions are often written by one person working at the university, which makes it difficult to state that it is the reaction of the university as a whole.

Nevertheless, the following reactions (in translation) give an idea of the range of opinions on the subject among Dutch universities / universities of professional education.

#### **HES Rotterdam (HBO)**

“At the HES it is rather difficult for the moment to implement ECTS, in addition to the national credit point system, for all study programmes (including the programmes in Dutch). The HES seems not to be prepared to express the study load for programmes in the Dutch language in ECTS credits; for programmes in English however, they use ECTS. To develop ECTS in to an accumulation system within the next 5 years, seems to be optimistic and quality control will be absolutely necessary.”

#### **NHL Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden (HBO)**

The NHL is positive about all (new) aspects of ECTS and ECTS as an accumulation system.

#### **CHE Christelijke Hogeschool Ede (HBO)**

The CHE is already translating its credit points towards ECTS in most of its faculties. They even think ECTS should be obligatory. They foresee good possibilities for the development of ECTS in to an accumulation system.

#### **AHK Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten (HBO)**

Socrates coordinator:

“ECTS can help in general, but in the arts, individual selection processes (auditions, etc.) will remain. Gradual introduction of ECTS is feasible and planned. AHK thinks that ECTS can be developed into an accumulation system but as stated above, individual selection processes (auditions, etc.) will remain. Limiting condition in an accumulation system will be an international commission for checking the level and quality [of education].”

“Advantages of an accumulation system could be the more flexible study-paths without unnecessary study delay, possibility of quality comparison and it could be an instrument in the process of recognition. Disadvantages are [possible] the discontinuity of training, [lack of] content linking; and the quantitative approach [so far] should be supplemented by a qualitative exchange system, but the question remains how to accomplish this.”

#### **Hogeschool Holland (HBO)**

“ECTS is a very good system, but mainly to be used for limited periods of study abroad, after which a student returns to his home institution. ECTS ensures recognition of credits gained



'Education shopping' by free-movers through Europe would be possible only in case the quality of education (Europe-wide) would be guarded.

Technische Universiteit Eindhoven

The university has implemented the ECTS system; however, not all academic staff is yet convinced about the usefulness of ECTS. They assign more importance to (former) ICP-networks or collaboration with a select, small group of partners, because of the in-built trust relation in these forms of co-operation.

In the different networks, mentioned in chapter 2, such as the Socrates co-ordinators, Admission officers/student advisors (KBS), the representatives of departments of International affairs of higher education institutions (COI, HIB) and the Committee for Consultation regarding Development Cooperation (COO), the questionnaire was put on the agenda. Some of their members have answered on a individual basis. In our conclusions (chapter 5) some of their comments / remarks will be reflected.

#### 4.2 Post-experience education / ODL

DVC

Open University (Open Universiteit)

No formal (written) reaction to our letter was received (yet) from the above listed organisations. However, a meeting for co-ordinators of post-experience education took place in the beginning of April 1999, during which the subject of ECTS (extension to other sectors or development in to an accumulation system) was discussed. In our conclusions (chapter 5) some of their comments / remarks will be reflected.

#### 4.3 Professional and adult education

BVE-raad (Raad voor Beroeps- en Volwassenen Educatie)

The BVE-raad is positive about the extension of ECTS towards the professional and adult education sector.

They consider ECTS a good instrument to foster international mobility.

One of the question put forward by the BVE-raad is, "how does ECTS relate to 'Europass'.

They would not like to see that institutions would have to participate in two systems (ECTS / Europass).

The BVE-raad is very doubtful on the feasibility of ECTS developing from a transfer system in to an accumulation system. They consider this impossible, because it would mean that there should be a content comparison of all European education programmes.

COLO (Vereniging Landelijke Organen Beroepsonderwijs)

COLO limited its reaction to its field of expertise: (secondary) vocational education

Vocational education in the Netherlands is offered by a large number of institutions.

Organisation of Dutch employers and employees play an important role in vocational education. Trade and industry are organised in 22 national bodies for vocational education (represented by COLO); they control the quality of education and assure the involvement of the employers in this type of education.

A national qualification structure was introduced with almost 700 qualifications on four different levels. On the basis of job profiles, qualifications, partial qualifications and

attainment targets are developed. The vocational preparation takes place in one of the 150.000 accredited apprentice companies. Quality control takes place on at least 51% of the examinations. This is called 'external legitimisation' and assures a close match between education and the job profiles.

“Every partial qualification has a number of course credits, thus providing a technical starting point to introduce ECTS. Introduction of ECTS into the vocational education may be helpful in providing Dutch employers insight into the weight of a (foreign) diploma. Likewise foreign employers may gain a similar insight. ECTS can contribute in providing information about vocational qualifications in Europe. This is an important advantage. A limitation of ECTS is that it says nothing about the content of an qualification nor about the relevance for a certain branch of industry. When comparing qualifications in this sector it's not only important to know the length and the kind of foreign education. It is also necessary to know what market value an education programme has in the Dutch labour- and education market, the so-called 'civil effect'. The criteria in this respect are the attainment targets of the Dutch qualification structure.

“Shopping around in various institutions in Europe to gain a full qualification is possible, but in practice hardly feasible, given the requirements 'asked for' by the labour market.. Qualifications are described as a 'whole entity', and cannot simply be divided into modules. ECTS in vocational education, in the opinion of COLO, can only be put to use in the transfer of parts of education. In every transfer a comparison of equivalence must be made in accordance with the demands of the Dutch qualification structure. This is not a simple matter. An education may have the same name but the education can be very different from one country to the other. The close connection between national- and regional labour markets and vocational education may be further complicate comparison and possible transfer of parts of education.”

COLO is the opinion that the ECTS grading scale as an instrument to measure performance could be interesting to justify some further research for its application into vocational education in Europe.

COLO wonders whether the grading scale has relevance for a branch of industry; COLO is the opinion that there is more need for an European grading scale for the legitimisation of exams, in order to get a qualitative judgement on examining in EU-countries.

Possible extension of ECTS towards the sector of vocational education could only be possible when it would take in to account the relevance for the (respective branches of) industry and the content comparability of qualifications (transparency).

COLO is the opinion that it would be desirable to make some kind of a link between 'Europass' and a possible extension of ECTS to the vocational education sector.

Note: COLO is working on an official document on this subject; therefore the above is a preliminary reaction only.

#### 4.4 International Education

FION ('Federation of Institutes For International Education in the Netherlands)

Most members of the FION acknowledge the importance of ECTS and a number of institutions is already implementing ECTS.

Both ISS (see below) and ITC (see below), members of FION, are implementing ECTS and are already mentioning ECTS in their brochures. Also MSM (Maastricht School of Management) uses the ECTS system.

Within FION the members agreed to keep each other informed on ECTS and is prepared to further develop the implementation of ECTS within International Education (where possible in co-operation with the other 'koepels').

#### (Individual) Institutions of International Education

ITC (International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences, Enschede)

ITC's reaction can be summarised as follows. ITC is currently implementing ECTS and plans to include ECTS credits in new programmes. However ECTS is only a useful tool; everything depends on the willingness of institutions and the trust in each others' education. ECTS alone, can not and will not change anything.

ECTS is designed for regular higher education. ITC uses different standards (in IE there are 48 weeks of study in one year and more hours of study per week). Therefore first of all a comparison of regular Dutch higher education and IE study load has to be made, and after this it would be possible to make an international comparison through ECTS.

ITC would welcome the implementation of ECTS in addition to a national system.

ITC does not see the feasibility / necessity / usefulness of ECTS developing in to an accumulation system. There always will have to be one institution which controls the quality of the package of education modules / programmes followed. Thus preventing unwarranted repetitions or a lack of cohesion between the various education modules / programmes followed and preventing the combination of elements or the level thereof being too basic.

ISS (Institute for Social Studies, the Hague)

The ISS will introduce ECTS credits in their brochures for the year 2000/2001; furthermore will it introduce ECTS credits on the transcripts of records of students (which started in 1999/2000).

## 5. Conclusions

The conclusions that can be drawn on the basis of reactions received to Nuffic's letter which was sent to both the respective 'koepels' and to individuals / individual higher education institutions and on the basis of discussions with people involved, can be divided in two parts:

- a] opinions on whether ECTS could be extended to other sectors of education
- b] opinions on whether ECTS could be developed in to an accumulation system.

### 5.1 Conclusions

#### a] Opinions on whether ECTS could be extended to other sectors of education

1) Mostly the reactions to ECTS as a credit transfer system are positive to very positive; however, there are negative aspects of the system that are often mentioned, like ECTS is very time consuming and it's difficult to maintain up-to-date descriptions in ECTS-guides due to the many changes in a curriculum.

This sometimes makes it difficult to get co-operation from faculties.

2) ECTS itself is not yet fully implemented and has yet to prove itself (more) completely. Provided that first of all (more) efforts will be made to overcome some of the negative aspects of the present form of ECTS, a number of organisations / institutions would not be opposed to extending ECTS to other sectors of education.

3) However, in many reactions it is mentioned that ECTS could be extended to other sectors of education, provided that each sector will have its 'own' ECTS system (preferably with a different name); an ECTS (like) system would thus function within each sector (intra-sectoral), but not between / among the different sectors (so not inter-sectoral).

The system in each sector will have the same characteristics, but will have to be used within one sector only.

4) Credit transfer from one sector in to another should, according to most reactions, not become a reality; in other words: extending ECTS towards other sectors could be useful provided that the barriers between the different education sectors remain closely guarded. If the above will not be the case, it would add to the confusion: extension towards other sectors of education could add to the confusion, because a credit point says nothing about the kind and/or level of education, but only says something about the study load.

5) An extension of ECTS towards adult and professional education sector would have to take "Europass" into account, thus preventing overlap (or duplication of efforts).

#### b] Opinions on whether ECTS could be developed in to an accumulation system

1) A (large) majority of organisations / institutions / persons is opposed to the development of ECTS into an accumulation system. Most have doubts on the feasibility of such an accumulation system. Mostly heard objections / fears are:

- ECTS is a system for credit transfer. It is by no means certain that it will also prove useful for accumulation, considering the objectives of the ECTS-system.

- accumulation will lead to 'shopping around' (different elements from all over Europe are being added up); this poses the question: 'who will be the last in line to award the (final) diploma and what frame of reference has to be used in that case'.

i] there always has to be a legal base for one institution in one country for a certificate in an accumulation system. 'Freely' accumulating credits where ever poses difficulties for the institutions that in the end should award the final diploma. This seems to be practically impossible.

ii] the 'shopping around' idea (of an accumulation system) is often mentioned as being a very negative development; 'shopping around' in the various universities around Europe is for now still utopian.

As long as there is no quality system to back up an accumulation system to assure that a good curriculum is followed, accumulation is useless.

2) ECTS takes into account quantity, rather than quality; and in case ECTS would develop into an accumulation system, first an overall European System for quality assurance would be necessary.

3) Often heard is the fear that accumulation will lower the quality of education / the end diploma.

4) Accumulation will mean adding up different sorts of credits; accumulation could also mean comparing different levels of education. This will cause enormous problems, unless accumulation will only take place within one level.

5) In education the emphasis is changing from education content to competencies or skills. Therefore any new (accumulation) system would have to incorporate this shift and ECTS (as it is right now) does not take this in to account.

## **Appendix 4.12 - Portugal**

(Estela Pereira – Universidad de Aveiro)

### ECTS EXTENSION

#### **Interim Report- Portugal**

In the period concerned (since May 10.) the study was carried out through formal contacts with people in key positions and informal discussions with people at different level of decision/ implementation. Some meetings are planned for September October, namely with professional bodies like the Economists, Lawyers and Medical Doctors. Also meetings at Ministry level are planned for non-university education. The situation in the different areas of ECTS extension covered so far are presented next.

#### **1- Credit accumulation in higher education**

As a general view we can say that the Community feasibility study came at the right time to enhance discussions on ECTS adoption that have been considered by the Universities and "Politecnicos".

##### *i- Universities*

Most public universities use the national credit system (contact hour based), that is a credit accumulation system. Interestingly it is not regarded as a credit transfer among Portuguese universities. All of them have with different degrees of success implemented ECTS within the Socrates program. The co-existence of two different credit systems makes sometime difficult to give the right ECTS credits to each course unit, as professors will convert arithmetically from one to the other. In general professors involved in the Socrates program prefer the ECTS to the national system and will be pleased if it would be generally adopted to advance with a study to move from the national credit system to ECTS. The key person in the discussions has been Professor Julio Pedrosa de Jesus, currently head of the Rectors Council.

##### *ii- "Politecnicos"*

The situation is different, as "Politecnicos" did not use the national credit system. Those involved in Socrates are using ECTS as a credit transfer. At the moment they are in a process of restructuring their curricula, as recently they were given by law the right to have besides the short three year degree ("Bacharelato") also the 5 year degree ("Licenciatura"), that previously was awarded only by Universities. Both Institutionally and through the professors



with a working knowledge of ECTS it is favoured the adoption of the system in the near future. The person with whom a formal meeting took place has been Prof. Fatima Morgado, deputy president to the President of the "Politecnicos" Federation.

From the contacts in this area of education it looks promising the prospect of implementation of ECTS in the regular university programs.

On the 18 and 19 November a conference was held in Lisbon on Internationalisation of Higher Education, organised by the Ministry of Education, with the participation of the Rectors and the Presidents of "Politecnicos", professors and students. The question of the adoption of ECTS as credit accumulation was debated in detail and it was considered a convenient step both by the professors, namely the head of the Rectors Council and also by the people from the ministry, that sees no obstacle in changing the credit law if asked by the Higher Education Institutions. As a point in favour of adopting ECTS is the fact that the Open University is already using ECTS as credit accumulation system. The debate is thus open about the change to ECTS as the accumulation system and although there are some questions still raised on the way to evaluate student work load in general it is felt to be a better system.

## 2-LLL

### *i- Advanced education for professionals*

There is a growing concern for continuing education among the different professions. Besides programs developed by universities also many programs are offered by professional bodies, private institutions trade unions and employers. A main concern is how to recognise the quality of the programs. Thus the two main issues are: how to recognise a given program as relevant and how to evaluate the amount of work in different programs. The first one is somehow important to avoid the idea of the "cafeteria style". Credits should only be awarded to programs with a quality recognised by some independent authority. Accepting this principle it is generally agreed that some quantitative measure of the work done in a program should be found. Meetings took place with professional bodies and Universities The engineer professional body (Ordem dos Engenheiros, OE) has taken this problem seriously. A draft document has been produced with some main points:

- the need that the programs are recognised by the OE and they put forward the criteria for recognition.
- The types of continuing education to be considered
- Credits to be allocated to the different types of continuing education. Here the OE includes also presence in seminars without assessment. This has been a matter of debate during the meeting

This document is currently under discussion in the OE. There is the feeling that an European credit system would be necessary. From the point of view of the person in charge of continuous education in the OE (Mr. Salgado de

Barros) some aspects should be included in a credit system: it should develop in the sense of crediting acquired competences. Also besides the credits some indication about the level of the program should be devised. In annex 1 some of the aspects the OE is considering as important for LLL.

The University of Porto is now the Portuguese co-ordinator of EUCEN (European Universities Continuing Education Network). The pro-rector in charge is Prof. Alfredo Soeiro, who answered the questionnaire. The importance of LLL is now increasingly taken into account by Universities. The diversity of LLL programs and the differences among different countries prevented so far the adoption of a credit system within EUCEN. The need for accreditation of the LLL programs in the sense of recognising the standards is considered one key issue. So it is felt that it is timely that an initiative from the Community takes place. In annex 2 the questionnaire. Prof. Soeiro has been recently appointed by the Rectors Council the person in charge of studying the application of ECTS to LLL. This is a clear indication that the Rectors Council is considering seriously the question of LLL. Also some meetings are taking place between the Rectors Council and the Engineers professional body to discuss LLL programs.

Another professional body interested in a credit system is the Nursery Profession. Although not so deep involved as the Engineers they have shown interest in adopting an European Credit system to LLL.

The primary and secondary teachers have a special program of continuous education. A committee set by the Ministry of Education validates the institutions and Professors that are entitled to give this type of Education. A credit system is in use, that is not the national system, but is also contact hour

In this area and in particular in the field of the recognition of competencies acquired outside the formal learning process the main issues are becoming increasingly the concern of the Universities. A preliminary step has been taken by the Portuguese Rectors Council that proposes a debate on:

- System for recognising competencies and abilities obtained outside the formal learning process to access higher education
- Models of teaching for people wanting to access higher education outside the normal system and how to credit these studies
- Pilot experiences in Portugal

From the President of the Rectors Council is the idea that ECTS or a similar system will be useful to quantify the acquired competencies.

At Ministry level there is one body in charge of study programs for people outside the normal schooling ANEFA (National Agency for Adult Education and Training). In a meeting held with Dr. Marta Alves in charge of the Agency the idea of giving credits to competencies already acquired by adults outside formal schooling was considered a positive measure. A first step to introduce such credits should also take into account the ways of evaluate competencies and also the approaches on devising teaching programs for the people concerned.

### **Concluding remarks**

In the different areas of possible ECTS extension interested partners have shown a serious consideration about the question of credits. There are indications that the Ministry of Education is taking up the issue and people in charge of preparing the Portuguese UE Presidency is ready to consider the problem. Two key people are: Prof. Pedro Lourtie, General Director of Higher Education, and Dr. Maria Emilia Galvão, Vice -President of GAERI (Office for European Matters and International Relations).

Universities and other Higher Education Institutions, professional bodies and Offices at Ministry level are open to discuss the issue. The Portuguese Presidency of the EU may be a good opportunity to enlarged the debate.

Tables with the main issues in the different areas

Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Implementation
ECTS adoption by higher education institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒facilitates student mobility</li> <li>⇒avoids dual systems</li> <li>⇒work load more adequate than contact hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒professors already used to the national system</li> <li>⇒how to calculate work load</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒commitment by the rectors council and the federation of "politecnicos"</li> <li>⇒change the current law</li> </ul>

Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Implementation
ECTS in LLL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒transparency</li> <li>⇒recognition of LLL by society</li> <li>⇒mobility of professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒diversity of teaching programs</li> <li>⇒validation of the study program</li> <li>⇒diversity of institutions involved in LLL</li> <li>⇒No indication of level of the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒awareness of the question by employers, trade unions and professional bodies</li> <li>⇒commitment of universities</li> </ul>

## **Annex I**

As an example of steps already taken, some aspects of the draft proposal from the Engineers Professional Body (OE) are presented. This is not yet implemented, and is now being discussed in the OE. Some aspects may differ in the final text. Also they are open to recommendations in credit allocation that will be widely used in Europe.

### *Recognition of the program*

- Identification of the institution responsible for the program
- Sending all teaching materials to the OE
- Time table
- Program objectives, competencies to be acquired and target people
- Detailed program
- Infrastructures
- Time of contact hours of teaching and estimated home work
- Number of credits
- Person in charge
- Curriculum of professors/monitors
- Methods of assessment
- Prerequisites for candidates

### **Publicity of the program:**

Some details about the information that should be publicised

### *Diploma awarded*

- Name of the Institution
- Number of credits
- Name of the program
- Summary of contents
- Place
- Number of hours of work (teaching and home study)
- Person in charge (if applicable)
- Assessment and marks

### **Some criteria for recognition**

- Relevance of competencies to be acquired and the target persons
- Coherence between program objectives and content
- Pre-requisites
- Contents in up dated topics
- Adequate teaching materials
- Realistic evaluation of teaching hours and home work
- Definition of assessment methods

## **Types of continuous education**

- Courses (modules)
- Conferences, Seminars
- Workshops
- Modules inside the enterprise
- Education in the work place
- Training by suppliers/clients
- Visits, stages, projects
- Communications to Conferences, paper presentation

### *Credits*

They are only awarded to programs recognised by the OE

1 credit unit to be awarded to

10 hours of study and assessment

20 hours of presence in a seminar, workshop, etc.

2 hours of teaching in continuous education with written material

1 paper presented in a technical journal

2 weeks of stage

## **Appendix 4.13 - Sweden**

(Author: Marianne Hildebrand)

 **HÖGSKOLEVERKET**  
National Agency for Higher Education  
Box 7851, s-103 99 Stockholm  
Tel/phone +46 - 8 5630 8500  
Fax +46 - 8 5630 8550  
E-mail Marianne.Hildebrand@h  
[www.hsv.se](http://www.hsv.se)

1 December 1999

### **ECTS Extension - Sweden**

Lifelong learning has been an important issue for Swedish education for several decades, especially since the higher education reform of 1977 in which access for adult students to higher education was widened and stimulated. One important feature is single-subject courses which are suitable for recurrent education and which facilitate accumulation of credits for adults who go between working life and further studies.

#### *1. Higher Education in Sweden*

Since the 1993 reform of higher education, higher education institutions have had increased autonomy in organisation of studies, use of resources and general organisation. The new degree system provides greater freedom for the students to plan their own studies. Independent institutions of higher education may be recognised by the Government and after application to the National Agency for Higher Education obtain the right to award degrees and/or receive state subsidies. Diplomas from all higher education institutions recognised by the Government have equal official value.

There is no distinction between university and non-university tertiary education. There are, however, long-term programmes designed to train scientifically oriented professionals and prepare for research in the field on one hand and short-term programmes designed to train

("högskoleprov"). Some faculties may introduce other tests. "Högskoleprovet" (the National University Aptitude Test) is a tool for selection as an alternative to school results. It is not compulsory and not an entrance test.

### *Postgraduate degrees*

It is possible to obtain a "licentiat"- or "doktorsexamen" in all faculties, with the faculty mentioned, e.g. "teknologie licentiatexamen". It is also possible to obtain a "filosofie doktorsexamen" (Ph.D.) at a faculty of engineering. Normally students go directly for "doktorsexamen" but it is possible first to obtain a "licentiatexamen" and then continue for the doctorate. The general requirement for admission to doctoral studies is to have a completed university degree, e.g. "kandidatexamen", "magisterexamen" or a professional degree after a long-term programme, or a foreign university degree giving access to doctoral studies in the country concerned. There are specific requirements also for postgraduate education.

All universities have the right to award "licentiat-" and "doktorsexamen". University colleges can apply for this right for a certain science area and be declared to be qualified to award these degrees for the area concerned.

## *2. Crediting System used in Swedish Higher Education*

The amount of studies required for the completion of a degree (or a course) is defined in terms of credit points ("poäng" in Swedish) where one credit point means a workload of 40 hours per week including lectures and independent studies.

The principle for translation of degrees is that degrees based on 120-140 credit points are translated as Bachelor's degrees and degrees based on 160 credit points or more as Master's degrees. Degrees from programmes shorter than 120 credit points are translated as 'University Diploma'. Certificates and degrees are awarded by the institution and need no other authorisation.

The academic year in Sweden runs from the end of August to the beginning of June, 40 weeks, and consists of modular courses normally ending with an examination or paper discussed in a seminar." (Högskoleverket, National Agency for Higher Education, Marianne Hildebrand, March 1994.)

## *3. ECTS in practice (drawn from Tiina Junkari's report on Finland and Sweden from September 1999, Appendix 4.6).*

### *3.1. ECTS in use*

ECTS is widely used in Sweden. Almost all higher education institutions are using ECTS at least in one or more faculties. Most experts who have a connection to ECTS find it very useful. They only hope that all the educational institutions should use it. All partners are finding benefits from the system.

Although the Information Package was a difficult concept in many institutions at the time when the very first one was done, the teachers have found it very useful later on. Structured course descriptions have helped experts in recognition of studies abroad.

Learning agreements are not used in the way and to the extent they were meant to. There are several reasons for this, one of them might be timing: semesters in the Northern Countries follow a different time schedule compared to Central European ones. Courses organised in the following semester are not known at the time when exchanges are prepared in Finland



and in Sweden. Nevertheless, learning agreements have proved to be very useful for course identification purposes. Experts in the home institution are able to find right course descriptions in the Information Package.

Transfer of credits functions to a great extent. There seem to be no attitude problems, in most cases it is just difficult to define the specific courses. It is easier in those study programmes where there are lot of optional courses. In certain programmes the optional part is usually not enough for a whole semester which makes longer exchanges difficult. Also in Sweden there are some discussions going on about the fact that ECTS is only a relative measure corresponding to the length of an academic year in different countries.

#### 4. *Feasibility to develop an extended credit accumulation system. Some examples.*

##### 4.1. *Definition issues*

Bertil Holmberg, ECTS Counsellor, Sweden who gave the idea to find an absolute measure instead of the relative one, may write a separate document on this. Time has not permitted to get this document yet.

##### 4.2. *Legal issues*

There are no legal barriers for developing ECTS as a European credit system to facilitate education, vocational training and professional development. On the contrary, in Sweden there is in the higher education ordinance farreaching paragraphs about recognition of knowledge and experience:

###### Tillgoräknande av kurs

12 § Om en student vid en högskola inom landet har gått igenom viss grundläggande högskoleutbildning med godkänt resultat, har studenten rätt att tillgodoräkna sig detta för motsvarande utbildning vid någon annan högskola. Detsamma gäller studenter, som vid universitet eller motsvarande läroanstalt i Danmark, Finland, Island eller Norge har gått igenom viss utbildning med godkänt resultat.

13 § Student har rätt att tillgodoräkna sig annan utbildning än den som avses i 12 §, om de kunskaper och färdigheter som studenten åberopar är av en sådan beskaffenhet och har en sådan omfattning att de i huvudsak svarar mot den utbildning för vilken de är avsedda att tillgodoräknas. Student får även tillgodoräknas motsvarande kunskaper och färdigheter som har förvärvats i yrkesverksamhet.” (Högskoleförordningen 6 kap. Grundläggande högskoleutbildning, 12 §, 13 §.)

The first paragraph states that a student having studied at one institution in Sweden or in another Nordic country should get the studies recognised.

The second paragraph states that students having studied abroad have the right to get courses recognised which correspond to courses at the institution concerned. It also allows a student having skills and knowledge earned at work recognised as part of studies if they correspond to the related studies.

From the presumption that this paragraph is not widely used in Swedish universities, an inquiry was made in November 1999. The answers to this showed that

- within teacher education there are cases where teachers having immigrated and applying for participation in a post-degree teacher training programme get one semester out of two exempted when they have more than three years teaching experience in their home country

- other examples within teacher education is a person becoming a teacher of economics and business administration who got work from this field recognised for the degree and a military officer who got his education and work experience recognised for a teacher's degree
- a student in business administration got exempted from a course in systems analysis and EDB as he had his own computer company
- students having gone from one job in children daycare to another, the latter requiring a higher level of education, have got work experience recognised. Also those who go from children daycare to becoming teachers in primary school get exemption if they have worked for more than 3 years after their degree
- within health sciences and physiotherapy there are examples of recognition of work experience
- and within laws there are cases where students have got work experience recognised as a special course within a related field.

The conclusion of this is that there is a legal provision for recognising work experience as well as previous studies, and it is actually applied to a certain extent in Swedish higher education. The question is how an extended ECTS could benefit from this provision and/or add to the implementation of the rules.

The intention was also to check to which extent previous studies from other parts of the education system, e.g. courses in folk high schools or extramural studies are recognised, but time did not permit this. There are however cases where such courses are recognised in accordance with the abovementioned paragraph.

There is also a new kind of post-secondary education in Sweden, higher (?) vocational education (KY), for which it is expected that recognition may occur in related higher education programmes.

#### 4.3. Academic and professional recognition

For the issue of ECTS extension, it is possible to identify the NARICs as a key group, since they are mostly in charge of both academic and professional recognition – especially taking the discussion on synergies in recognition into account. A couple of years ago there was a seminar held in cooperation between the Swedish NARIC and professional organisations, especially SACO (see below), as well as employers, on synergies in recognition. The discussions were very fruitful and this turned to be a very good way to bring actors together who have the same aims but rarely meet. Such seminars could be organised again on this new topic. NARICs often are in more or less contact with these other actors and give information to both higher education institutions and society at large.

#### 4.4. Three comments from the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO) as to the plans for extending the ECTS system to areas within lifelong education and training.

a) The ECTS system has obviously become a valuable tool for promoting mobility within the university area. The ECTS has developed robust structures and routines and therefore it would seem logic to consider an extension of the system into other areas. The Confederation is positive to such a development, and is willing to take active part in the work to implement such an extension. One argument for this is that the Confederation is giving high priority to the issues of life long education and training, for

all groups in working life, including those with university education. The Confederation is, it should be mentioned, recruiting only members with university education.

b) Together with the sister organization in Denmark, AC, the Confederation (hereafter referred to as SACO), has launched a project in the Öresund area with the objective of promoting science-based further education for various groups in working life in the region, both for those with previous university education and those without (but with capacity and experiences necessary to take part in such education). The project is being supported by the Interreg programme, and is implemented in close cooperation with the Öresund university programme and the individual universities and colleges in the region.

The first part of the project is focussing on analysis of further education and training needs within various professional groups in the region. Analysis groups, composed of professionals and university representatives, are being set up. In total, 6 or 7 such analysis groups will be working during the forthcoming winter.

The results of this work will be transmitted to the relevant institutions and faculties of the universities and colleges in the region, with the objective of inspiring the development of new further education education and training. AC and SACO will participate, by way of local representatives, in the analytical work. Even more important, perhaps, is that SACO and AC will actively participate in promoting the resulting courses and programmes to professionals and other groups in the labour market in the region. Particular emphasis will be given to the promotion of cross-border participation in the further education courses.

One important aspect of this project is that it will contribute to the mobility within the overall Öresund region. One of the problems in achieving this will be to simplify the understanding of diplomas and certificates; employers will have to get used to evaluating diplomas and certificates from the other side of the Öresund.

In this context, SACO could see the value of considering an application of the ECTS system to the (hopefully) growing number of science-based further education courses in the region. The ECTS system could simplify the understanding of the merits of such courses, and thereby become an important tool for the development of an integrated and more mobile labour market in the Öresund region.

SACO is willing to take part in considerations as to extending the ECTS system to science-based further education courses.

c) SACO is, as are the other Swedish trade union confederations, actively involved in the preparatory work for the new Structural fund objective 3. Part of this objective is focussing the needs for human resources development, i e, life long education and training. SACO would

like to raise the issue of possible links between the ECTS system and activities within objective 3.

Ernst Erik Ehnmark  
Director, International Affairs  
SACO

## **Appendix 4.14 - United Kingdom**

(Authors: John Reilly [UK Socrates National Agency] and Stephen Adam [University of Westminster])

### UK REPORT FOR THE ECTS EXTENSION PROJECT

#### CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Context
- 3 Government lifelong learning initiatives
- 4 Feedback on the Extension of ECTS to Lifelong Learning
- 5 Individuals and Organisations Consulted
- 6 Useful Web-site addresses
- 7 Proposed Pilot Projects

#### APPENDIX

1. Notes of a Meeting at the Quality Assurance Agency, November 1999.

## 1. Introduction:

A number of key developments relate to the ECTS extension project. This report identifies 'the state of the art' concerning lifelong learning and credit systems in the UK. It also includes responses concerning the extension of ECTS to lifelong learning. Due to time pressure there has only been limited discussion with professional bodies and Ministry representatives. Much of the information in the report has come from recent official publications.

## 2. Context:

In the UK there have recently been a large number of ambitious initiatives to promote lifelong learning and reform the educational system. A number of organisations are active in the area and there are some variations in Ministries and bodies responsible for it in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. As a result of this, and the numerous reforms, the situation concerning lifelong learning is highly complex in a devolved UK. Within the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) there is a separate division with a Minister in charge. A range of separate publications exists for different areas of the country. However, the thrust of all developments is in a similar direction. In England and Wales much of the impetus for reform has come out of the National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education report '*Higher Education in the Learning Society*' 1996, known as the '*Dearing Report*'. There was a similar report for Scotland, the '*Garrick Report*'. These were undertaken to review the conditions of higher education in the UK and to make recommendations for the next two decades.

In the UK there is a great deal of experience, particularly in higher education, of credit accumulation and transfer systems. The country is in the process of creating a unified integrated, national credit system.

Progress has been most pronounced in Scotland. It has a blueprint for a national framework covering all qualifications, from those for people with learning difficulties through to postgraduate degrees. Scotland is the leader in the UK with the '*Scotcat*' credit transfer scheme supported by every higher education institution. The Green Paper on lifelong learning '*Opportunity Scotland*', confirmed the importance of creating a comprehensive Scottish Credit and Qualifications framework - '*Adding Value to Learning*' (SCQF). This framework is intended to widen access to, and increase participation in, lifelong learning and to improve the skills of the Scottish workforce. It is designed to relate different qualifications to each other (including further, higher, vocational and academic education) and assist with the transfer of relevant credits from one qualification to another. It is also intended to help employers and educational institutions assess an individual's qualifications. SCQF will be implemented from 2000 onwards. In particular SCQF is designed to '*help bring together those with responsibility for the delivery of education and training and to establish compacts involving*

*schools, further education, higher education, community education and employment-based learning to deliver education and training packages that meet local needs*' (SCQF page 7).

The publication of the QAA *Consultative Paper on Higher Education Qualifications Frameworks for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) and for Scotland (1999)*, marks a significant step forward towards a UK unified credit system. It is designed to position all UK higher education qualifications relative to one another, underpin standards, clarify progression routes and establish a common currency for credit accumulation and transfer. It is also designed to link professional and vocational qualifications. All qualifications should be defined in terms of minimal amounts of credits at certain levels. All qualifications sharing the same title should have the same minimum credit requirements and levels. Each module should be defined in terms of outcomes, credits and levels. However, the proposals do not create a seamless system between further and higher education that would benefit lifelong learning.

Existing credit-based programmes throughout the UK offer intermediate qualifications after each year of full time study during a Bachelor's programme. They also have wide access through APL and APEL and often build in many opportunities for returning adult learners. In the UK credits normally provide a measure of learning outcomes as quantified by the notional number of study hours required for achieving the outcomes. Most higher education institutions assign a single unit of credit to the learning outcomes at a particular level that are typically achieved in 10 notional hours of study. A great deal of practical experience has been built up in the UK concerning all aspects of credit accumulation and transfer.

### **3. The Government Lifelong Learning and Credit Initiatives:**

The main publications associated with credit developments and lifelong learning are listed below:

- *National committee of Enquiry into Higher Education: 'The Dearing Report', Higher education in the learning Society (HMSO 1997).*
- *National committee of Enquiry into Higher Education: Report of the Scottish Committee, 'The Garrick Report' (HMSO 1997).*
- *The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) (1999).*
- *Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System: A credit Framework as a vehicle for Lifelong Learning (1998).*
- *A (QAA) Consultative Paper on higher Education Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (EWNI) and for Scotland (1999).*
- *The Learning Age – The Government Green Paper on Lifelong Learning.*

- *Learning to Succeed – The Government White Paper providing a new framework for post 16 learning Set agenda (1999).*
- *First Report of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning – learning for the Twenty-first Century (Chair, Professor R.H.Fryer).*
- *Second Report of the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning – Learning Cultures: Next Steps in Achieving the Learning Age (Chair, Professor R.H. Fryer).*

To summarise, there has been a host of initiatives concerning lifelong learning in the UK. The key initiatives of the UK government in lifelong learning include: the establishment of the University for Industry (Ufi Ltd); the ‘New Deal’ programme designed to get different groups of unemployed people back to work; establishing ‘Learning Direct’, the national lifelong learning helpline for initial advice and information; the government review of post-16 education and training; the development of ‘Individual Learning Accounts’, etc.

#### 4. Feedback on the Extension of ECTS to Lifelong Learning:

The field of lifelong learning in the UK is very broad. It includes both formal and informal educational activities. It encompasses different educational modes, styles, levels, purposes, contents, outcomes and motives. A number of different stakeholders have responsibility for different aspects. The main feedback from the different individuals and bodies consulted was favourable. The development of a credit framework for lifelong learning in Europe mirrors the developments taking place in the UK.

The following are the main points and concerns raised:

- Most credit systems rely on input measures that relate student workload (teaching/learning time) to credits. Education is now becoming more focused on the output/outcomes of programmes. This is becoming more significant with the development of qualifications frameworks linked to subject benchmarking which emphasises the knowledge, skills and competencies gained at different levels. How long teaching/learning takes is now less important than the actual achievement of the learning. However, despite this it is probably impractical (in the short term) to promote a European credit system based on outputs when no international agreement on learning outcomes/competencies and levels exists. Although this type of development should be encouraged, it is necessary in the meantime to rely on an input student workload measure of credits (including all formal teaching, private study, assessment, practical work, etc.) to provide a basis of standardisation. This should be supplemented by relating the ECTS credits to the relevant domestic systems that explain their level and learning outcomes. Informed judgements (by student, employer and institution) can then be made about the recognition and use of the credits in question.
- The question of ‘levels’ is highly problematic. In the UK, the development of the various qualifications frameworks and subject benchmarking (linked to generic



level descriptors) should clarify this contentious area. However, at the moment it remains full of ambiguities in the UK and rest of Europe. Work should be encouraged to lead to more convergence concerning different levels by developing agreed descriptors. Yet, the solution in the short-term must remain the linking of ECTS credits to the local explanation of their level.

- A meeting, on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1999, with John Randall (Chief executive) and Peter Williams (Director of Institutional Review) of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), John Reilly (Director of the Socrates Council), Stephen Adam (University of Westminster) discussed QAA involvement with ECTS institutional visits and the ECTS extension project. It was agreed that ECTS could be included in one or more of the codes of practice under development by the QAA. Also, that it might be possible to include the participation of QAA quality assessors in ECTS institutional visits. Regarding the ECTS extension the QAA expected to be involved in on-going discussions associated with the Diploma Supplement/Transcript. The extension of ECTS to lifelong learning would also need to address the whole issue of levels. A full note of this meeting is contained in Annex 1 to this paper. It was agreed that co-operation and transparency between organisation responsible for quality is an essential pre-requisite for the development of an ECTS credit system for lifelong learning.
- A meeting with Maggie Woodrow, Director of the European Access network at the University of Westminster, emphasised the huge differences in what is meant by lifelong learning across Europe. Lifelong learning should focus on meeting the needs of those groups that are excluded from education and create an agenda for equity and social inclusion.
- A meeting with David Hardy of the UK Open Learning Foundation (OLF), emphasised the need to generate more raw data on the need for a European credit framework for lifelong learning. A comprehensive mapping-study of the demand and needs for such a system would be of benefit. It was also suggested that such a system (and therefore future pilots) would perhaps have most positive impact in the area of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- A meeting with Steven Sykes, Senior Assistant Registrar, Credit accumulation and Transfer - UK Open University, raised issues concerning the definition of credits. Distinction between different types of credit must be made explicit. Credits should be defined in terms of notional time but not years of study, with much more of a focus on outcomes. Very clear guidance on the definition of credits will be needed in any future extension of ECTS to lifelong learning. In accumulation systems the distinction between 'general' and 'specific' credits must be made to guard against the development of '*à la carte*' credit systems. General credit is the total amount of credits allocated to qualifications, units/modules or programmes. When an individual wishes to transfer credits from one qualification to another, however, it is quite possible that some of the learning will not be relevant to the new qualification. So, 'general credits' are any credits an individual may have gained but they may not be appropriate for exemption or use in a particular programme, therefore they cannot be specifically recognised in that case.

Overall, the responses to the ECTS extension project were generally positive. Meetings with representatives of the Open University, Open Learning Foundation, European Access Network (EAN) and other organisations raised a number of important issues associated with credit-based lifelong learning. These included, the dangers of ‘à la carte’ credit systems and the need to strengthen links between different European systems for quality assurance. In addition, the usefulness of a competence-based output approach to credits was highlighted. There is a need to develop better transcripts (Diploma Supplements) to explain the nature and level of credits. The QAA in the UK is currently working on a national transcript that is compatible with the Diploma Supplement. The QAA is also developing a national system of subject benchmarking with a clear of system of generic level descriptors designed to clarify levels and ensure standards.

## **5. List of Individuals and Organisations Consulted:**

Dr Norman Jackson	Assistant Director Developments, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), Southgate House, Gloucester GL1 1UB.
David Hardy London.	Chief Executive, Open Learning Foundation, Devonshire Road,
John Randall	Chief Executive Officer, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Southgate House, Gloucester GL1 1UB.
John Reilly	UK SOCRATES-ERASMUS Council, University of Kent at Canterbury, CT2 7NZ.

- (1) *A pilot to explore and refine the application of existing ECTS tools and processes to credit accumulation in higher education. This could also be applied to adult Education Centres.*
- (2) *A pilot to target key professions to apply ECTS to record and promote Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This would target key professions, professional bodies and appropriate thematic networks to apply ECTS as a credit accumulation framework to record a) initial professional development and b) continuing professional development.*
- (3) *Feasibility Study for a European-wide Framework to Support Lifelong Learning modelled on the UK's internet-supported Continuing Development Award for work-based learning*

Ufi Ltd is a company limited by guarantee, established by the UK government, to promote lifelong learning among businesses and individuals in employment. Ufi Ltd will be a powerful state broker. It will stimulate the marketplace and create new opportunities for work-based learning. It is developing an internet-based platform for the delivery of learning materials and a guidance framework to support learners, tutors and employers and support administration and regulation. It is creating a new framework (Continuing Development Award) that universities can adopt if they can demonstrate that they have the capacity to support and quality assure the type of learning the award is intended for.

The Continuing Development Awards will enable learners to:

- develop individual programmes based on past, current and planned work-related learning and contexts;
- extend their capabilities and enhance their individual effectiveness, employability or business competitiveness;
- develop the capacity for continuous self-managed learning through work which is recognised through a framework of nationally recognised awards;
- create individual award-bearing programmes to meet needs that are not catered for elsewhere in the national system; and enable employers to assemble award-bearing programmes that directly assist their competitiveness and relate to their development needs;
- support the ambitions of their employees within the context of the workplace and the company's interests;
- access expert assistance through the mentoring of employee development and access to specialist learning materials delivered 'just-in-time;'
- meet needs that are not catered for elsewhere in the national system e.g. to reflect new and hybrid occupations and to respond to emerging needs as they happen.

Programmes that lead to Continuing Development Awards will contain a variety of learning activities. The precise nature of the programme, including the overall learning objectives, is specified through a Learning Contract. The framework will support a consistent approach to the accreditation of experiential learning and the construction of customised learning through work-based projects and other work-related activities.

The Ufi Ltd approach provides a model for contract-based learning and internet-based guidance and support, that has the potential to be extended outside the work-based context. The vision is that it could support a consistent Europe-wide approach to contract-based lifelong learning that is customised to the particular needs and learning contexts of individuals. The proposal is for a trans-national feasibility study to consider the potential for transferability and adaptation of the Ufi Ltd framework.

## APPENDIX 1

### MEETING AT THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY MONDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 1999

Present:

*From The Quality Assurance Agency:* John Randall, Chief Executive; Peter Williams, Director of Institutional Review; Julie Swan, Director of Development;

*From the University of Westminster:* Stephen Adam

*From the UK SOCRATES-ERASMUS Council:* John Reilly, Director

#### BACKGROUND TO THE MEETING

John Reilly had written to the Chief Executive to discuss two issues:

- (1) The ECTS institutional visits and the extent to which QAA might be involved.
- (2) The ECTS Extension Project and the views of QAA.

#### **(1) ECTS Institutional Visits - QQA Response**

- 1.1 The QAA representatives explained that there were structural difficulties in relation to QAA taking on additional work. Their primary responsibility was to meet the requirements of the Funding Council, the institutions and the NHS which fund the agency.
- 1.2 All the work of the agency needs to be conducted on a full-cost basis since it

**(3) QAA Subject Reviews**

- 3.1 In relation to subject reviews, the Agency would find it difficult to have separate reporting on ECTS.
- 3.2 As far as participating on an *ad hoc* basis in one or two ECTS institutional visits, this would be possible and might either include staff from the QAA or one or more of fully-trained quality assessors.

**(4) Commenting on the QAA response, John Reilly explained:**

- 4.1 That a *sine qua non* for participation in ERASMUS is a commitment to full academic recognition for the period of study in the host institution. ECTS was designed to provide a method which would ensure academic recognition.
- 4.2 In the academic year 1998/99, 10,000 students from UK Higher Education Institutions participated in ERASMUS. This represented a significant decline from the figure of 12,000 in 1994/95.
- 4.3 The UK SOCRATES-ERASMUS Council and the DfEE wish to see a significant increase in UK mobility but to ensure that issues of quality and academic recognition were effectively addressed. By recognising the significance of the European Dimension and outward student mobility, the QAA would contribute to a wider recognition of the importance of promoting quality mobility.
- 4.4 Including ECTS within normal subject views need not be the object of a separate report or any significant additional work but simply incorporated in the review of standard documentation and procedures, in so far as it relates to programmes involving study periods in another country. Again explicit reference to ECTS by QAA would support DfEE objectives.

**(5) ECTS Extension and Development**

- 5.1 The basic objectives of the ECTS extension project were outlined.
- 5.2 The development and extension of ECTS could underpin the European degree model outlined in the Bologna Declaration and the qualifications framework being proposed by the QAA.
- 5.3 The development of student progress files also has clear links with the European Diploma Supplement.
- 5.4 The QAA expects to be contributing to on-going discussion in all these areas.
- 5.5 If ECTS is to be extended to all aspects of Lifelong Learning, including credits for Continued Professional Development, Access course, accreditation of prior learning and prior experience, then the system will need to address the whole issue of levels, not only within institutions and member states but also on a European basis.
- 5.6 The range of developments taking place in the UK make it an appropriate time to promote the development and extension of ECTS under SOCRATES 2.

JER/AH

22 November, 1999

UK-SEC\METING AT THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY



## **Appendix 4.15 – Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers** (Heikki Suomalainen)

### **ECTS/European Credit Transfer System**

#### *Employers point of view*

Basically the employers consider the mobility of the students as a very good thing. In the future or already now it is necessary. The employers fully support the idea of mobility and in practise the enterprises are supporting it by offering training places for foreign students.

The project Diploma Supplements was very excellent process which from the employers point of view gave good results in principle. The Diploma Supplements help people move around and in that way strengthen the competitiveness of European enterprises.

In order to promote the mobility of the students it is necessary to create a system where studies abroad can be accepted as credits in the diploma. This makes the basic idea of spending at least one semester abroad in a foreign university very good.

However it is not possible for enterprises in most cases to learn and to follow the credits of individual students and in so doing to follow their success studies. That's why it is of such a vital importance for employers to know exactly what kind of credits the students are having and what are their value in the universities. Basically enterprises offer training places a view the number of years have studied towards a certain diploma. Of course there are exceptions.

Given the fact that the Bologna Declaration showed the interest of almost all European countries to proceed in this way and also with some kind of a timetable the whole pattern of studies would be simplified and so clearer for employers to understand the meaning and the details of credits. We are of course ready in the future to discuss about these matters.



## **Appendix 4.16 - European Association of Distance Teaching Universities** (Author: Piet Henderikx)

### Summary EADTU Members' Response to ECTS Questionnaire

The questionnaire was completed by members from Austria, Belgium, France (FIED), the UK (OU and OLF), Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany (FernUniversität), Sweden, Denmark and the Czech Republic.

#### **1. Questions on the national/regional System**

Higher education in Europe is very diverse. Accordingly, the application of ECTS up to now also shows differences and limitations. With regard to the EADTU members, it is clear that the open and distance universities from their start used credit systems, expressing the workload of the student in credit values and describing courses using a set of educational descriptors.

Generally they also used credits for their vocational and professional education, at least partially. All this is compatible with ECTS.

However, they seldom apply the ECTS system for the exchange of students between institutions like traditional universities do (the learning agreement, including the transcript of record and grading system). It should be mentioned that the UKOU has always played an important role in the development of credit systems and the validation of studies. The EADTU members, who represent a national association, mirror the differences between Europe's traditional universities systems.

In more than thousand European universities ECTS is implemented now, which is reflected by the answers of the members. National and institutional credit systems can differ, but are generally compatible with the ECTS. A credit is then always quantitatively expressing a standard workload for a standard student for a given programme.

In the ECTS the total workload is defined at 60 credits for one year. Some systems use another number for the yearly workload, but this can be accounted for when using the system. So far most European traditional universities don't account credits to vocational or professional training or universities of life long learning. Most exceptions are found in the Scandinavian countries. However, in most countries this is a matter of institutional policy, as no legal barriers prevent this in practice. This is the same for credit accumulation (except legal barriers in Belgium, where credits are accounted on the basis of achievements in a one-year educational programme).

Credits only reflect the quantity of achievement in the context of an educational programme. They do not express any evaluation of the content and the academic level or the quality of a programme. That is because the ECTS has mainly been used in the context of bilateral student exchange in the framework of ERASMUS/SOCRATES. These bilateral agreements, often within small networks, are based on mutual understanding and trust, which over the years is confirmed by practice.

EADTU members emphasize this formal quantitative character of credits, but they also stress the need for a qualitative description (academic content and level, competencies, taught outcomes etc.)

Furthermore, they point out that not all educational institutions even use the ECTS system, i.e. private institutions.

In applying ECTS, problems occur. In practice some institutions have not always modularized their educational programme (i.e. in Germany) or the programmes have sometimes not been described in terms of workload, but only in terms of content/performance (i.e. in Denmark). The ECTS grading system (A-F) is often felt to be a difficulty, as it doesn't differentiate achievements in the top segment of the scale in such a way as it does in the middle.

In the UK, important differences between universities are reported with regard to the application of a credit system, although many institutions have no difficulty to make their system compatible with ECTS.

The OLF made the remark that possibly the demand of students for crediting their achievements in a portfolio is rather weak, although it might increase by the internationalisation of higher education.

## ***2. Advantages of creating a European Credit Accumulation Framework***

As ECTS is a credit transfer system, EADTU members refer to mobility as one of the major advantages of the system. Of course ECTS promotes the exchange of conventional students, but it should also be a tool for the virtual exchange of students ("virtual mobility") i.e. either before a semester abroad, or instead of, or as a complement for a course at the home university. This can be done between open and distance universities, or between these universities and traditional universities. This can particularly be useful in a lifelong learning context, but also in international programmes, i.e. Master programmes.

Furthermore, EADTU members emphasize the use of ECTS as a tool for the exchange of courses, as according to the system a full description of courses with all academic information is given. In doing so, institutions can widen the choice of students and promote a European dimension in their course profile. Above all, institutions can enhance the quality of their distance education offer by using courses within networks of institutions. Furthermore, they can reduce costs by adopting existing materials or by cooperating on a complementary basis with partner institutions.

Also, a virtual ERASMUS scheme is possible. In such a scenario, specific arrangements are needed for examinations.

Members warn against the dangers of a fragmentation of educational programmes by allowing students to enlarge their choice towards a kind of cafeteria model.

From an institutional point of view, EADTU members report that ECTS is crucial for promoting academic collaboration between European universities on a comprehensive and wide multi-lateral basis, so as to encourage the movement between full time/ on campus and part time/off campus arrangements. The ECTS provide transparency to facilitate mobility and the mutual recognition of courses and programmes. It is a vehicle for collaboration between autonomous institutions, taking diversity into account.

Furthermore, ECTS is useful in the context of quality assurance. Institutions are stimulated to enhance their position, to benchmark best practice and to evaluate the value of qualifications.

In Central and Eastern European countries ECTS pilot schemes are set up for the extension of the system to their universities. This development has to be encouraged.

In distance learning context, adult learners could accumulate a portfolio of several competencies and skills on a European market, according to their career objectives and interests. This will particularly facilitate the “free circulation of people”.

### **3. Conclusion**

In the future, ECTS should be as simple and transparent as possible and created to:

- Include professional, vocational and corporate qualifications;
- Address educational systems outside the European Union, more particularly the Eastern European states currently seeking membership;
- Allow transference with other non-European educational frameworks, especially those of the United States, given the high demand for student exchange programmes between the USA and European states;
- Promote mobility of students between single mode distance, single mode campus, dual mode and virtual universities;
- Permit advanced standing into degree programs on the basis of accreditation of prior experiential learning;
- Enable the integration of new and developing units, degree programs and modes of study.

The development and introduction of an ECTS system will be a complex process, best achieved at the strategic policy level through processes enabling wide dialogue among universities across Europe. At the tactical level, the diversity of EADTU members (in terms of the number of nation states and institutions, the size and scope of activities, mode of delivery, etc.) makes it ideally suited to undertake applied research work into the problems and practicalities of developing and introducing an ECTS system. Hence there is a strong argument for a short, but well-focused follow-up project, involving universities and employers. Such a research project would provide invaluable insights into the best way to achieve Europe-wide development and delivery of the ECTS system.