



EUNEC Conference



Towards a transparency of qualifications: a service to all EU citizens The point of view of all the stakeholders in education and training

Brussels, 25th – 27th October 2004

Statements

EUNEC (European Network of Education Councils) is particularly concerned about the role of education and training in the personal development of learners and in the reduction of social inequality. EUNEC hopes that the search for transparency of qualifications will contribute to an equal access of all learners to a qualification and to more social cohesion.

We want to stress the following topics:

General principles

- 1 The construction of transparency of qualifications is a process, which can assure the recognition of experiences, of initial education and continuous learning and of informal and non-formal learning. Therefore, it is a factor of social promotion to all European citizens.
- 2 The objectives of creating transparency in qualifications have to integrate the five following dimensions:
 - a focus on the learner by valorising flexible, diverse and efficient ways of learning
 - b lifelong learning
 - c mobility
 - d durable integration in the labour market and in the society
 - e accumulation of acquired competences, rather than display of errors.
- 3 Transparency of qualifications should also contribute to create more chances for the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g. under- and unskilled workers,...). We certainly need qualification levels for all categories of competences, even for the learners with the most feeble competences, on condition that it is not a mere statistic instrument.
- 4 Without touching the principle of subsidiarity, EUNEC claims that common European principles for transparency are important, but they must respect the country's specific economic and cultural context. However, Europe has to provide a common language and a common reference frame to improve the communication on qualifications.

- 5 It is important that common instruments for transparency of qualifications use a broad concept of durable professionalization and employability in the long term. In the discussion with stakeholders and the European institutions, EUNEC will emphasize the importance of this broad concept.
- 6 Equal access to a qualification and to lifelong learning enhances European social cohesion. Therefore, it is necessary that the European Union, in co-operation with all the partners in VET, creates the conditions for a real recognition of qualifications and gives the right of a geographical, professional and social mobility to all the citizens of all Member States.

Area of application

- 7 In the context of lifelong learning, the construction of a transparency of qualifications touches not only the vocational education and training but also the secondary and higher education. This implies coordination between the Copenhagen and the Bologna process.

Tools

- 8 In order to be useful for all citizens, tools to enhance transparency must be simple and practical. They must be understandable and manageable for everyone. Still, guidance should be provided if necessary.
- 9 The development and the implementation of any initiative to enhance transparency have to reinforce the efforts already made to clarify the concepts in use.
- 10 Tools to enhance transparency (Europass, validation of competences, the credit transfer system for VET, etc.) have to be developed in a common dialogue with all the stakeholders (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers).

Involvement of all the partners

- 11 Transparency of qualifications and the question of enhancing equal access to qualifications are strongly influenced by the economic conjuncture and the developments on the labour market. Nevertheless, the education field must have the possibility to take part in the political debate; more particularly, it should be involved in the implementation of the tools of transparency. Where their role is important, the NGO's also have to be consulted.
- 12 In the context of citizenship, it is necessary that learners should be involved in the process of reflection on the evolution in VET.
- 13 In order to develop a real participation in the Copenhagen process, it is necessary that the abundant information already available should be accessible and comprehensible to the education field and its partners.
- 14 A coordinated communication strategy towards the public opinion and the employers and employees in particular is necessary to strengthen the public awareness towards more transparency of qualifications. This strategy could create the indispensable mutual trust and strengthen the credibility of the system to employers and employees. To enhance the confidence in the system, both at national level and European level, it is necessary to involve all the local partners (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers) in the process.

- 15 Changes in the VET-system cannot be realised without the active collaboration of the providers of vocational education and training and the teachers or trainers. However, such a change shall only be possible when the European Union and the Member States provide real implementation strategies, accompanied by the necessary means. It is important to maintain a bottom-up approach based on common principles.