



## EfVET Mission Statement and Vision 2006 - 2010

The European Commission is working on a number of policy lines and instruments implicating major challenges for VET providers. In order to assist the European Commission in realising the Lisbon Agenda, EfVET (European forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training) is dedicated to deliver valuable contributions from the VET providers' point of view. As a representative forum for VET institutes from 21 European countries, EfVET is in a perfect position to fulfil this ambition. In addition, EfVET's strength lies in our dual track; we are working at a strategic policy level as well as we have a key role in both initiating projects and acting as dissemination partner in (member) project development and activities.

On a strategic level EfVET has a key role in representing its members and contributing to EC policy debate on behalf of the VET sector – both working with the EC and other stakeholders and presenting our common perspectives on EU policy issues as they relate to VET and Lifelong Learning.

From a practitioner perspective EfVET provides a key role in offering members the opportunity to share good practice, explore new and innovative teaching and learning methodologies, develop partnerships across Europe and learn from each other.

Vocational education and training (VET) and Lifelong Learning are at the heart of the Education and Training 2010 process, which is part of the Lisbon Agenda. Many of the challenges coming from the Lisbon ambitions cannot be realised without VET. The European Commission has acknowledged this, and as a consequence launched the Copenhagen process to enhance European cooperation in VET.

Although education is a national responsibility for each government, European VET providers are increasingly confronted (directly and indirectly) with European policy initiatives which have implications for both their core business and business processes. These policy initiatives come to the colleges through a range of supporting and supplementing measures to national policies. VET colleges need to be aware of these developments, and their (potential) impact. EfVET can raise the awareness of its members and support the European Commission and national governments in implementing European policy.

Every country has its own structure for organising vocational education and training. This leads to enormous differences between countries on basic elements and structures. This diversity needs to be cherished. On the other hand, a number of key elements (like student centred learning environments, relations with (local) business) are the same in every EU country. These resemblances form the foundation for European instruments to enhance European cooperation in VET.

The primary focus of European Commission dialogue and consultation with member states has hitherto been conducted through Government. It is now well recognised by the European Commission that they need to open dialogue with Civil Society in general and the Non-governmental Organisations (NGO's) representing the breadth of civil society. EfVET offers one



such conduit for consultation across the Vocational Education and Training and Lifelong Learning arena.

Education and Culture is not the only policy field educational institutions have to deal with. The Service Directive is an example of internal market regulation that can have an impact on educational institutions in some countries. Also matters like value added taxes influence the business processes, because it results in higher expenditures

In this manifesto we formulate a number of challenges and priorities which EfVET believes needs to be addressed. They certainly do not cover all European challenges our members are confronted with. From our point of view, emphasis should be placed on the following five policy lines:

#### Mobility of workers / employability

Today's students are tomorrow's employees. All vocational learning pathways in Europe lead students to craftsmanship and a position on the (European) labour market. Instruments like Europass and the new Integrated Lifelong Learning Programme can support colleges and students in their international mobility ambitions.

Mobility is not possible without lifelong learning and individual approaches. Challenge however is to keep the administrative burden for colleges as low as possible as bureaucracy in financial support can seriously harm our ambitions.

EfVET is actively involved in the process of Lifelong Learning via EUCIS (European Civil Society Platform for Lifelong Learning) and is determined to fully take part in developments concerning recognising the relevance of non formal education and the importance of recognition of prior learning, as this will foster the employability of our students.

EfVET will act as a sparring partner for the European Commission in discussing Lifelong Learning policies, the dissemination and implementation of these initiatives, and the necessary administrative requirements.

#### Equal opportunities for all

VET colleges not only have an important role in leading (young) people to employment on the highest level, they also have a responsibility concerning social inclusion. This task is not only important from a social perspective but is an economic challenge as well. Support-measures for people inactive on the labour market cost our welfare states a lot of money. Besides this, social inclusion also has effects on reducing criminality, improving safety, reducing health care costs, etc.

Creating equality of opportunity for all is not something that can be done just by schools. We ask social partners, business and governments to form partnerships with us.

We are, can and will be partner in projects focussing on issues related to equal opportunities, like e.g. combating early school leaving. We form a linking pin between member projects and the translation of project outcomes to European policy level and play a crucial role in disseminating these project outcomes.



We again call for a more sophisticated debate on issues related to e.g. early school leaving, because learning does take place outside formal learning pathways in schools via informal and non formal learning as well.

### Transparency

In the diverse field of European VET, transparency is needed. Instruments like the European Qualification Framework (EQF), European Credit Transfer System for VET (ECVET), Europass and Quality Assurance (QA) can be useful tools.

These instruments can have an impact on the educational processes as well as on the business processes of schools. The European instruments can supplement and support national instruments, but should not interfere with them and most certainly should not create extra bureaucracy.

Crucial for the success of these instruments is mutual trust. EfVET will promote the use of the instruments and can thus play a role in enhancing this mutual trust. We also have the ambition to contribute to discussions in the numerous platforms and act as sparring partner for the European Commission on these themes.

### Students

Our member institutions educate and train their students (both old and young) in such a way that they are prepared for a dynamic and innovating labour market. Equally, they work in partnership with business and other stakeholders / social partners to raise the skill levels of the workforce and promote lifelong learning and skill development. They provide guidance and support for the practical training and are involved in the whole range of formal, informal and non formal learning.

We ask business to facilitate our students with practical work placements.

EfVET will support its members to promote increased mobility through collaborative partnerships across Europe. We actively promote innovation of educational systems, methodologies and tools focussing on learners' needs and expectations. In addition, we will work closely with European agencies to promote strategies for recognition of learning outside the formal domain.

### National networks of VET providers

For VET providers in their respective countries to have a voice, national networks on strategic levels should be encouraged. Although we acknowledge the differences between countries, VET in Europe will be strengthened by these networks.

We ask the European Commission to support networks of providers in Member States and throughout the European Union.

EfVET will seek to contribute to the establishment of these networks by providing support, training and sharing good practices.



## Summary

VET colleges are responsible for

- offering qualified vocational education on the level of skilled workers for the (European) labour market
- training of learners in order to get a starting qualification
- contributing to social inclusion, not only from the social perspective, but also from an economic point of view
- contributing to Lifelong Learning and encouraging upgrading of skills for an aging population
- creating a smooth pathway from general to (higher) vocational education
- education as social engineering: training for labour market and social participation
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## **We ask**

- less bureaucracy in financial support from the EU
- cooperation with social partners, business and governments in contributing to social inclusion
- European instruments not to interfere with national regulations and create extra bureaucracy
- business to facilitate our students with practical work placements
- the European Commission to support the establishment of national networks of VET providers