



## CEDEFOP EXPERT WORKSHOP ON PERMEABILITY IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### PERMEABILITY, A WISFUL THINKING APPROACH?

Thessaloniki, 27-28 January 2010

#### OUTLINE AND DRAFT AGENDA <sup>(1)</sup>

#### Background to the workshop

Current developments of qualifications frameworks, of credit systems or validation principles prompt European countries to develop and implement corresponding tools and mechanisms in their domestic contexts. These are linked to issues of broadening the access to education and training, ensuring equity and social cohesion and taking lifelong learning from policy to practice. Permeability is related to the use of the learning outcomes approach to education and training (as a support to flexible learning pathways and qualifications awarding processes), to the transparency provided by qualifications frameworks on the relationships between qualifications and their levels or to validation as ensuring the links to prior learning experiences and workplace learning. This is for instance mentioned in the latest Council conclusions on the priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training for the period 2011-2020<sup>2</sup>. The Bruges Communiqué from December 2010<sup>3</sup> reinforces the issue of permeability in the European agenda.

Previous Cedefop workshops on permeability showed the diversity of features to ensure permeability between VET (Vocational Education and Training) and classical/academic higher education and further vocational education. The participants underlined the difficulties to grasp permeability in the reality of education and training systems. At system level, permeability is addressed by validation or crediting of prior learning experiences, by introducing flexibility in access rules, by designing full or partial qualifications in cooperation between VET providers and higher education institutions, or with enterprises. It raises questions on educational objectives, differentiation strategies and partnerships.

The on-going Cedefop study on credits and permeability reviews research on permeability; it preliminarily concludes on the high level of interest for this topic and heated debates on equivalences between VET and HE qualifications, often challenging institutional barriers. This statement opens up the discussion on institutional settings and on the role of social capital for supporting permeability at the edge of VET and HE (Higher Education). How much networking is needed to support permeability? Is the issue best to be answered by the divide between VET and HE? Is it more a question of

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<sup>(1)</sup> as of 24.01.2011 / Isabelle Le Mouillour

<sup>(2)</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/117849.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/117849.pdf)

<sup>(3)</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf)

VET and HE getting closer and similar? This issue has been the core of Cedefop study on vocationally-oriented education and training at higher qualifications levels. Both studies will deliver some arguments during the workshop; others will be brought from on-going research projects and the discussions during the workshop.

The least discussed issue in policy is - for the time being - the viewpoint of learners. Tracer studies on individual learning pathways are seldom and the European statistical database not sufficiently developed for this kind of issues. This should not deter us to consider this issue. Studies by Mr Gallagher, Ms Aynsley, Mr Maguire (as presented in 2009), and others point out to the fact that permeability has to do with motivational, volitional, social and biographical aspects. This is for sure in our context a new topic for discussion that will build up the third topic in our workshop.

The workshop will be documented within Cedefop 2011 working paper on permeability. It is part of Cedefop 2011 work programme and of its activities jointly agreed with the European Commission. It is conceived as a space for discussion and progress in the complex issue of permeability in education and training.

### The workshop

The workshop is organised along three main topics:

1) Mechanisms for permeability in education and training systems

Tentative questions: Which are the main elements of education and training supportive of permeability? Does a 'best practice' exist?

2) Individual perspective on permeability

Tentative questions: Is progression an individual choice or a necessity in view of changes on the labour market? How are individual rationales cared for in policy and practice? Are individuals sufficiently prepared and supported for professional/geographical mobility?

3) Networking for permeability?

Tentative questions: Is networking between institutions the best way to initiate permeability? What are the triggers of partnerships? What is the role of partnerships for permeability? Is it creating a closed-shop?

The workshop is based on recent research activities undergone by different experts in Europe and Cedefop studies such as the study on vocationally-oriented education and training at higher qualifications levels (to be published in 2011), the study on credits and permeability (on-going). It also aims at identifying new issues for research and policy progress. The agenda is set to allow for constructive and critical discussions.

**AGENDA (AS 24 JANUARY 2011)****Thursday, 27 January 2011**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 09:30 - 10:00   | <i>Registration</i>  |
| <b>Welcome session</b>  |  |
| 10:00 - 10:10   | <b>Welcome to the workshop</b><br>Christian F. Lettmayr, Acting Director, Cedefop  |
| <b>Opening session</b>  |  |
| 10:10 - 10:20   | <b>Permeability in education and training: Wishful thinking?</b><br>Isabelle Le Mouillour, Cedefop   |
| 10:20 - 10:40   | <b>Permeability, an issue in European Education and Training policy</b><br>Jan Varchola, European Commission   |
| 10:40 - 11:00   | <b>Looking from outside Europe: The Japanese perspective</b><br>Yuki Inenaga, University of Tsukuba, Japan<br>Keiichi Yoshimoto, Kyushu University, Japan          |
| 11:00 - 11:20   | <b>Critical review:</b><br>Eric Fries Guggenheim, Car-Céreq BETA, Université de Strasbourg, France   |
| 11:20 - 11:45   | <i>Tea/coffee break</i>  |
| <b>Workshop session on mechanisms for permeability</b>                          |  |
| 11:45 - 13:15   | <b>Towards a typology of mechanisms for permeability</b><br>Andreas Saniter, ITB, Germany  |
| 13:15 - 14:45   | <i>Lunch</i>   |
| <b>Workshop session on permeability dedicated to the individual perspective</b> |  |
| 14:45 - 15:00   | <b>Introduction</b><br>Isabelle Le Mouillour, Cedefop  |
| 15:00 - 15:40   | <b>Imagined futures, motivation and choice for progression/transition in the context of career pathways</b><br>Sarah Aynsley, University of Sussex, United Kingdom |
| 15:40 - 16:10   | <b>From CVET to HE</b><br>Gerhard Syben, BAQ, Germany  |
| 16:10 - 16:20   | <b>Questions and answers</b>   |
| 16:20 - 16:50   | <b>Qualifications frameworks and individual pathways</b><br>Anne Murphy, NQAI, Ireland   |
| 16:50 - 17:00   | <b>Questions and answers</b>   |
| 17:00 - 17:15   | <i>Tea/coffee break</i>  |

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 17:15 - 17:45 | <b>Discussion between participants</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is progression an individual choice or a necessity in view of changes on the labour market? Are individuals sufficiently prepared and enabled for professional/geographical mobility?</li> <li>2. How are individual rationales taken care of in policy and practice?</li> <li>3. How could research take this issue forward?</li> </ol> |
| 17:45 - 18:00 | <b>Critical review: From access to success?!</b><br>Lorenz Lassnigg, Institut für Höhere Studien, Austria   |

### Friday, 28 January 2011

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 10:00 - 10:10   | <b>Introduction</b><br>Isabelle Le Mouillour, Cedefop   |
| 10:10 - 10:40   | <b>The relationship between VET and HE: Understanding VET at higher qualifications levels</b><br>Douglas Thompson, SPI, Portugal  |
| 10:40 - 11:00   | <i>Tea/coffee break</i>   |
| <b>Workshop session on the issues beyond technical features: social capital and networking for permeability</b> |   |
| 11:00 - 12:30   | <b>Key contributions:</b><br>Alfredo Soeiro, EUCEN, Portugal<br>Rolf Kristiansen, European Masters of Skilled Crafts, Norway<br>Hans Daale, EURASHE, Belgium<br>Anna Atlas, Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji, Poland   |
|   | <b>Discussion between participants</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which form of cooperation is best to establish permeability?</li> <li>2. What are the triggers of and success factors for partnerships?</li> <li>3. What is the role of social capital and how can it built in partnerships for permeability?</li> <li>4. How can mutual trust be established between partners?</li> </ol> |
| 12:30 - 12:45   | <b>Critical review:</b><br>Torsten Dunkel, Cedefop  |
| 12:45 - 13:15   | <b>Wrap-up and closing session</b><br>Isabelle Le Mouillour, Cedefop  |
| 13:30   | <b>End of Workshop</b><br><i>Possibility for lunch at Cedefop (service hours: 13h00 - 15h00)</i>  |