

European standards for qualifications and skills in the e-commerce sector



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ALL-ECOM project is a Sector Skills Alliance to set European standards for qualifications and skills in the e-commerce sector” that seeks to address the challenge of skills and competencies imbalance within the commerce sector by improving commerce human resources’ qualifications in e-commerce through the integration of new technologies in the strategy of both retail and wholesale commerce and by contributing to ensure harmonization at national and European level of standards of qualifications and skills in the e-commerce.

WHAT’S NEW IN THE PROJECT?

A common methodology for the design of qualifications and for the recognition of competences in the commerce sector, using a learning outcomes approach is one of the main objectives of the ALL-ECOM project. As part of the project strategy to achieve this objective, a learning mobility for partners’ staff was organised by SOC, the Employment Service of Catalonia in articulation with FETICO, the Federation of Independent Workers of Commerce (project promoter), in Barcelona, from 27 to 30 June 2016.

During 4 days, 15 participants from the 9 project partners had the opportunity to present the Spanish, the Portuguese and the Austrian education and vocational training systems as well as exchange the different methodologies in place in the participating countries for the design of qualifications and recognition of competences. It was also the time to present the qualifications existing in each country for the

commerce sector with a view to uncover how far competences in e-commerce are developed within the commerce sector qualifications.

As the testimonies below will reveal, those presentations and exchanges were crucial to inform partners’ discussion regarding the definition of a common methodology for the design of professional qualifications and for the recognition of competences, using a learning outcomes approach. Also it was the stepping stone to the discussion around how to incorporate in existing (commerce related) qualifications of the National Qualifications Frameworks of each country, the new learning outcomes in the field of e-commerce that the project will develop.



We asked to one representative from each country and from each type of organization present in the project (representative of the sector; VET provider in the commerce sector; institution having a regulatory function within the national education and vocational training system) their opinion on the added value of the learning mobility for the project development as well as their testimony on “lessons learn” at a personal/organization level and the results are:



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Category “Representative of the sector”; Country “Portugal”

“For the project, it was crucial to know the state of the art of the other countries concerning the development of training in learning outcomes. Sharing information concerning different VET realities, in a face to face mode, also constitutes an added value for the progress of work and for the consolidation of concepts and the establishment of the next paths. At organizational level, it was also very interesting and useful because for a social partner is essential to ensure the relationship between education and training systems and the needs of enterprises and labour market and this staff mobility has allowed the empowerment of that connection by increasing knowledge about education and training systems which will benefit the work of conceiving more suitable training standards for e-commerce”.

Rita Siborro, Ana Carmo, CCP

Category “VET Provider”; Country “Spain”

“As the last member to join the project, the staff mobility has been an excellent opportunity to meet face to face with all the partners, and, as a VET provider, to take an overview of the state of the art in professional qualifications on e-commerce in Europe and in the other partner’s countries. In addition, the real benefit has been to achieve a common framework and a working basis to develop one of the main project aims. To our organization, the most important thing that we acquired is a deeper knowledge of the methodologies in the professional qualifications in general and in e-commerce area in particular used in Austria and Portugal.”

Ramón Zayas Manero, IBECON

Category “Institution having a regulatory function”; Country “Austria”

The following added value and lessons learned were identified by the Economic Chamber Styria:

- ◆ “Understanding of the interaction between national and EU-wide qualification standards;
- ◆ Interesting overview of the training systems in the commerce sector in Spain and Portugal;
- ◆ Joint development of a procedure for the implementation of trainings in the field of e-commerce at a lower qualification level;
- ◆ Through the ALL-ECOM project the needs of commercial enterprises regarding basic training in e-commerce have become concretized. The project results in form of low-threshold training tools will provide an optimal offer for the member companies of the WK”.

Isabella Schachenreiter, WK Steiermark



As a direct result of the inputs and exchanges, the basic structure of a common methodology for the design of qualifications and units of learning outcomes was agreed, using as reference the work already produced by the Portuguese National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP, I.P.). In fact, the learning mobility revealed that Portugal and Spain are ahead on their work of developing qualifications using a learning outcomes approach and that they use similar methodologies and that Austria can learn a great deal from this.



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BY WHOM IN DETAIL?

ALL-ECOM gathers a multistakeholder partnership, coming from 3 Member States (Spain, Portugal and Austria). Each country is represented through a cluster of organizations, each one composed by **organizations representing the sector, by VET providers in the commerce sector and by institutions having a regulatory function within the national education and vocational training systems.**

In this section we briefly present each participating partner and what they expect from the project to their country/organisation.

Spain

FETICO is the **Federation of Independent Workers of Commerce**, a trade union of the commerce sector created in 1979 that represents the interests of the employees of the commerce sector. It is the Spanish trade union with the largest representation in the retail activities. FETICO has more than 50.000 affiliates and around 150.000 voters in elections.

FETICO is **ALL-ECOM** project promoter and its **main expectation is that the project** allows continuing working to promote vocational training of workers in the Commerce sector and to ensure that the training offer available is updated and adapted to the needs of the labour market. The opportunity of cooperation and exchange of information and knowledge with entities related to the sector in other European countries is also an added value pointed out by FETICO.

IBECON is a **VET provider** and HR consulting company founded in 2003 in Valladolid, currently having offices in Madrid, Burgos, Soria, Seville, Mallorca, Tenerife and Gran Canaria. IBECON is the parent company of the group ASPASIA dedicated to vocational training, job counselling and career guidance. IBECON is a private employment agency accredited by the National Public Employment Service (SEPE in Spain) to

assist them in job placement activities. IBECON has an area of technological development in which they offer IT solutions in fields such as digital contents, cloud and web based developments and LMS (e-learning platform) solutions.

According to IBECON Spain have regulations about electronic services and e-commerce. However, it does not have adequate qualifications on e-commerce. Therefore, **IBECON hope that the project will** develop and propose the necessary qualifications according to national and European requirements, allowing preparing and accrediting the sector professionals.

SOC is the **Employment Service of Catalonia**, the body of the Catalan government with responsibility for labour mediation in Catalonia. SOC offers its services to workers registered as jobseekers but also for self-employed workers and companies, enabling them to announce job vacancies through SOC in order to find workers whose profile closely matches their requirements. SOC is, therefore, a free public service that basically operates as an intermediary to establish contact between people looking for work (registered jobseekers) and companies that need workers.

When asked about their **expectations towards the project SOC stated that** “The commerce sector is undergoing huge changes due to the development of information and communications technologies. From our organization point of view, we expect that ALL-ECOM project allows us to start developing a common professional qualification validated in the three countries involved in the project. This professional qualification will help us to provide workers with appropriate training in accordance with the requirements of the existing labour market”.



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Portugal

CCP is the **Portuguese Commerce and Services Confederation**, a private employers organization of the commerce and services sector, created in 1976, that represents the interests and aims of the employers/entrepreneurs of commerce and of several services, gathering around 100 sector and regional associations and representing more than 200.000 enterprises, including micro and small sized enterprises and more than 1 million jobs (600 thousand from the commerce sector). CCP also assumes the role of social partner and, as such, assures the representation of the sector in national and international bodies, and takes position on relevant legal proposals.

What CCP expects from ALL-ECOM project is to reach two major objectives related to his own mission. On one hand, to contribute for the upgrading of skills among the sector's employers and employees in the use of e-commerce and other digital tools and on the other hand to contribute to a greater presence of commerce and services sector companies in the digital market.

CECOA is a Vocational Training Centre for the Commerce and Services, created in July 1986 by a protocol signed between IEFP - Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (public body depending on the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security and responsible for the implementation of the national policies in terms of Employment and VET) and the Portuguese Commerce and Services Confederation, another Portuguese project partner, as described above.

With a national scope, CECOA has its head-office in Lisbon and two other branches in Porto (north) and Coimbra (centre). It provides education and vocational training for young people, people in the labour market (employed or unemployed), trainers, as well as tailor-made solutions for organizations from the commerce and services sectors. Since 1986, CECOA trained more than 102.000 trainees.

As a reference vocational training centre for the commerce sector, **CECOA expects that the project** support its strategy of constantly working for the benefit of the sector progress and competitiveness, through the acquisition /development of the required e-commerce related competences by the sector human resources as well as CECOA concern with the permanent updating of the National Catalogue of Qualifications as member of the Sector Council for Qualification "Commerce and Marketing".



ANQEP, I.P. is the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training, a public institute, under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, in coordination with the Ministry of Economy.

ANQEP's mission is to coordinate the implementation of policies regarding education and training of young people and adults, as well as to ensure the development and management of the National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences. One of the main instruments to reach these aims is the National Catalogue of Qualifications, in whose definition and up-dating the Sector Councils for Qualification participate. ANQEP, in coordination with the Sector Councils for Qualification and the other services responsible for the implementation of VET policies, plays a key role in bridging the world of education and training and the world of work.



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ANQEP expects the ALL-ECOM project to contribute, mainly to one of its attributions: to promote, through the corresponding instruments and structures (particularly through the design and updating of the National Catalogue of Qualifications) the identification, the production and the comparability, at national and international level, of the essential qualifications for the competitiveness and the modernization of the economy. In this sense, ANQEP expects the project to allow the design of qualifications that integrate the main challenges placed to e-commerce and that integrate the needs of identified learning outcomes.

Austria

ÖGB/GPA-djp is the Austrian Trade Union Federation/Union of Salaried Private Sector Employees, Graphical Workers and Journalists. Founded in 1945, the Austrian Trade Union Federation is the only Austrian organization representing the interests of workers based on voluntary membership. The number of members is now approximately 1.4 million, i.e. roughly 40 % of all those employed.

GPA-djp is the union of salaried private sector employees - Union of printers, journalists and paper Workers and has the most members within the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB). GPA-djp has the collective bargaining mandate for all apprentices and employees in the commercial sector. The GPA was the first trade union organization which obligates itself to implement the strategy of gender mainstreaming.

When asked about **what GPA-djp expects from the project**, the answer was short and clear: "Employees in the commerce sector should be fit for the future challenges at work. Qualification is the main target to achieve that."

Nowa is a **non-profit regional association** above party lines with the City of Graz and surrounding municipalities as members and is active in the region in the development and implementation of

innovative strategies and concepts for the promotion of equal chances for all population groups and equality for women and men in the labour market, in vocational training, in general education and in regional development and economy. **Nowa provides a wide range of educational opportunities and supports access to technology** in the field of life-long learning in "Learning and Resource Centers" in the City of Graz and Styria.

The core competence of Nowa is the all-embracing expertise in creation, development, implementation and realization of innovative and professional ways of VET - always integrating gender sensitive methods and didactics and a diversity-perspective.

Nowa runs a "Gender-Competence-Centre" and also consults private businesses in the field of HRM with the focus on equality between women and men, diversity management and active aging to strength the competitiveness of regional businesses.

Nowa expects from the project that it can bring "Qualifications in the field of e-commerce, especially for employees in the retail sector, taking into account low qualification levels and different approaches to lifelong learning and knowledge and experience regarding e-learning. Qualifications have to be closely connected to their field of work (connected commerce).



Wirtschaftskammer Steiermark (WK) is the **Economic Chamber Styria** and it represents the interests of Styrian companies and is a vital part of the Austrian Chamber system which was



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established by the Austrian legislative body to safeguard the interests of particular social and professional groups. WK represents more than 65.000 member companies and actively participates in the law making process in respect of both federal and provincial laws and regulations. WK is a modern service provider and offer fast expert advice on topics from labour laws to customs information. The Economic Chamber is the most important training partner for the benefit of its members and through it educational facilities - WIFI & Campus02 University of applied sciences - WK contributes to improving the competitive ability of domestic companies.

WK expects that the project can bring “Offers for employees of the member companies of WK, concerning basic qualifications in the field of e-commerce up to level 4 EQF, in addition to the high level qualifications which are already offered in the sector of commerce”.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE SECTOR?

European Commission proposes new e-commerce rules to help consumers and companies reap full benefit of Single Market

Delivering on its Digital Single Market Strategies, the European Commission has presented a plan to boost e-commerce by tackling geoblocking, making cross-border parcel delivery more affordable and efficient and promoting customer trust through better protection and enforcement.

Read more: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1887_en.htm

EU leaders call for 'swift and determined progresses' in removing barriers to e-commerce

At their last Summit in Brussels on 28 June, EU Heads of State and Government adopted an

agenda calling for swift and determined progress to bring the full benefits of the Digital Single Market to European stakeholders before the end of 2018. Among the top priorities of European leaders stands the removal of barriers to cross-border e-commerce.

Read more:

<http://www.ecommerce-europe.eu/news/2016/eu-leaders-call-for-swift-and-determined-progress-in-removing-barriers-to-e-commerce>

The Future of Europe: Four Trends That Will Define Growth Opportunities

Forbes magazine explores the findings of a new study, “Future of Europe,” summarizing the dramatic changes the region will undergo through 2025 and highlights macro-to-micro implications on businesses and society. The benefits of creating a Digital Single Market (DSM) is one of the trends identified as “it could contribute €415 billion per year to Europe’s economy, create jobs and transform public services. It will mainly unlock e-commerce potential: steps include reducing VAT, cross-border logistics, and a single law for economic trading across EU. The biggest obstacle in cross-border ecommerce is different regulations. If the same rules for e-commerce were applied in all EU Member States, 57 percent of companies would either start or increase their online sales to other EU countries.”

Read more:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/sarwantsingh/2016/03/21/future-of-europe-mega-trends-that-will-define-growth-opportunities/#1ae39d25da99>

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