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MINUTES

ESCO Maintenance Committee meeting

18-19 January 2012
Hotel Marriott
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1.   Opening of the meeting

Ms Gerd Goetschalckx, Vice Chair of the ESCO Maintenance Committee (MAI), opened and chaired the meeting. Ms Gerd Goetschalckx asked Ms Jolana Blazickova who attended the MAI meeting for the first time, to introduce herself to the other MAI members.

2.   Presentations

Mr Martin Le Vrang gave a presentation on the ESCO Job Matching Demo as a practical example of a skills based job matching application.

Mr Dietmar Wechsler presented the German Klassifikation der Berufe 2010.

Ms Jolana Blazickova presented the Czech National System of Occupations, the Czech Central Database of Competences and the Czech National Qualification Framework.

Ms Gerd Goetschalckx presented Competent, the new classification system of the Flemish PES, as well as a live demo of innovative labour market services that can be provided by using Competent in combination with the matching tool Elise.

The MAI agreed on having presentations by MAI members about national and sectoral classification systems in the coming MAI meetings.

Ms Katrien Vander Kuylen gave a report on the first Introductory meeting for three reference groups, "Agriculture, forestry and fishery", "Hospitality" and the "Cross sector" Reference Group.

She continued afterwards with a proposal for the work program for 2012 based on the brainstorming output of the first MAI. The MAI discussed the proposal. In 2012 the MAI will work on the ESCO guidelines, advise on the methodological approach and monitor the technical implementation of ESCO.

3.   Developing guidelines for the reference groups

On the second day of the meeting the Maintenance Committee discussed the development of guidelines for the revision of ESCO.

3.1.   Step 1: Setting the scene by summing up the product requirements

- The MAI agreed to keep possible future applications using ESCO in mind while developing the guidelines for the reference groups.

- The MAI stated that a balance is needed between starting from scratch while developing ESCO and using best practices from already existing relevant classifications. On behalf of the ESCO Secretariat, 3S Unternehmensberatung has performed a study on O*NET and is currently working on a study which analyses the existing national classifications and how these can serve in the development of ESCO. The O*NET study has already been shared with the MAI, the new analysis will be shared when it is finalised and presented to the ESCO Board.

- The ESCO Secretariat will keep the MAI updated regarding the development of the qualifications pillar and its relation with the skills/competences pillar.

- ESCO brought a new aspect to the table which makes it unique in the world of National Occupational Classifications/Systems: the aspect of Interoperability. The MAI would like to explore this aspect and therefore suggests to already discussing it with the PES and other stakeholders at this stage to understand the full impact and engagement of the stakeholders to exchange information through mapping to ESCO.

3.2. Step 2: Discuss important characteristics of the guidelines

3.2.1. Scope of ESCO and definition of key concepts

- Eurostat will take the responsibility for the linking ESCO Occupations to ISCO 08 by using the ILO Job Title Index. Eurostat aims at creating its own Job Title Index.

- The MAI agreed the occupations pillar in ESCO should fully cover all labour market activity. It should include unpaid work, voluntary work and self employment. (Political) mandates are in general not covered in ESCO, they will only be included when it is a real occupation. The question whether "tasks" should be included in the occupations pillar or possibly even as a separate pillar, requires further reflection.

- The MAI advised to not normally include personal characteristics such as a good hand-eye coordination or physical strength into the skills/competences pillar. They should only be included as far as they are covered by a certificate. The areas of knowledge are covered in both the domain of skills/competences and qualifications.

- ESCO will cover concepts of European relevance. While the whole labour market needs to be covered, concepts should be limited in level of detail. ESCO could cover regional concepts (such as "reindeer breeder") e.g. with more generic occupations such as "breeder of other livestock". This will ensure that all ESCO concepts are of European relevance.

- As an answer to the question whether ESCO needs to include additional word lists, the MAI advises to not make it a first priority. Instead, the ESCO data model should be kept open for further developments to refine ESCO's granularity according to the labour market's needs. Even though a start can already be made with these lists the aim should be to build on the end user feedback for developing the additional word lists.

- It is difficult to indicate the level of granularity ESCO should aim for. This will differ a lot by occupation and will depend on the methodology for identifying concepts. The MAI advises to aim at an as general as possible and as detailed as necessary for future use by applications. The MAI proposed to indicate to the Reference Groups two or three reference classifications that have a suitable level of detail (e.g. ROME).

- The MAI had a first discussion on the definitions of key concepts within ESCO and will continue this discussion in the next MAI meeting.

3.2.2.   Relationships within the pillars

- The MAI advises avoiding polyhierarchy in the occupations pillar in order to guarantee the use of ESCO for statistical purposes.

- The top level proposal for the structure of the skills/competences pillar is currently based on the ISCED education fields. The MAI believes this is a feasible structure, but final analysis will follow.

- The MAI asks to clarify the relation between the skills/competences pillar and the learning outcome descriptions in the EQF.

- The ESCO Secretariat will share documents on the development of the qualifications pillar[1] and it's relation with the EQF[2]. In the next MAI meeting, the MAI will discuss the development of the qualifications pillar based on these two documents.

- The MAI advises to not give reference groups the task to indicate skill levels per occupation. Eurostat will not need this information in order to group occupations in the ISCO classification.

3.2.3.   Relationships between the three pillars

- In the next MAI meeting, the MAI will discuss the link between skills/competences and qualifications.

- The MAI advises to have reference groups decide which skills/competences are relevant for an occupation based on existing sources and/or decisions that have already been taken by social partners.

- The question whether sectoral reference groups will be allowed to follow different methodologies to arrive at the expected output, is raised but has not yet been answered by the MAI.

- The MAI raised the concern that at this stage the members do not have enough information to take informed, final decisions regarding e.g. the data model of ESCO.

- For the next MAI meeting, the MAI would like to have a presentation of the experiences with pre-ESCO v0 in EURES.

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[1] ESCO2011SEC050FINAL -ESCO qualifications pillar: overall approach

[2] ESCO2011SEC049FINAL - ESCO and EQF portal

4.   AOB

The next ESCO Maintenance Committee meeting will take place in Brussels, on 18-19 April 2012.

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Participants

ESCO Maintenance Committee Members

Ekeland, Anders	Statistics Norway, Senior Adviser
Heathwood, Cathy	Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA),Principal Officer Qualifications and Skills Accreditation
Wechsler, Dietmar	BW Bildung und Wissen Verlag, Service provider and information expert in the fields of education, training, occupations and careers
Šlekytė, Donata	Lithuanian Labour Exchange at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Deputy Head of Labour Resources Division
Goetschalckx, Gerd	VDAB, Co-ordinator R&D
Wass, Gunnar	PES Sweden, Senior handling officer
O'Connor, John	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Development officer
De Ruijter, Judith	AO Consult, Senior researcher/advisor
Diekmann, Knut	Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Director Principals of Further Vocational Education Policy
Goulet, Valerie	Pôle emploi, Pole ROME Adviser
Blažíčková, Jolana	TREXIMA, Head of HRD and Labour Market Department

Permanent observers to the ESCO Maintenance Committee:

Franco Lopez, Ana	EC/ESTAT, Head of section, European Commission
Mijangos, Garbine	EC/DGT, Lead translator for the ESCO project, European Commission

ESCO Secretariat

Goelen, Wallis	ESCO Secretariat (DG EMPL)
Le Vrang, Martin	ESCO Secretariat (DG EMPL)
Niedra, Ginta	ESCO Secretariat
Scatoli, Carlo	ESCO Secretariat (DG EAC)
Stjernquist, Henric	ESCO Secretariat (DG EMPL)
Vander Kuylen, Katrien	ESCO Secretariat
Van der Sanden, Karin	ESCO Secretariat (DG EAC)

Excused

Bird, Tony	Lantra Sector Skills Council, Head of Business Development
Nordhaus, Hans Ulrich	DGB, Member of the Executive Board