



ESCO MAI 28-Minutes

## **Minutes of the expert groups**

Brussels, 4 December 2018

### **28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ESCO Maintenance Committee (MAI) - Brussels, 20 November 2018**

#### **Introduction, adoption of the minutes and agenda items**

The Commission (COM) opened the meeting and informed members that MAI member Mrs. Kinga Szebeni is currently working for the European Commission as a national expert. Therefore, her status is now MAI Observer.

The agenda of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting has been approved, with no additional points for discussion.

The minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting have been approved, with no further comments.

As required as an operational follow up from the 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, COM confirmed that MAI members directly working for public employment services can attend mapping training webinars. COM confirmed as well that all MAI members can have access to the ESCO mapping platform.

COM informed members that the procedure for nominating national single points of contact in charge of all matters related to the EURES/ESCO mapping processes is ongoing and that it will report to the MAI once nominations are concluded.

COM also confirmed that is currently investigating how to share the names and contact details of members of COM expert groups with related groups, while respecting data protection rules.

COM informed members that written comments on the meeting documents were submitted by Mr. Tony Bird prior to the meeting.

#### Operational follow-up:

- COM to ask members of the Europass and EQF AGs for their explicit consent to share their contact details with other COM expert groups during their next meetings .

#### **1. Structuring the ESCO skills pillar**

COM provided members with an update on the work for structuring the ESCO skills pillar.

COM presented the Canadian classification of skills and knowledge and the four-step methodology that will be used to structure the skills pillar. COM presented the criteria for the selection of experts that will support the ESCO team for this work, namely:

- professional expertise in the knowledge areas of i) qualifications and curricula design and development, ii) design and development of career guidance services and applications and iii) labour market statistics;
- proven track record of working with data modelling and classification systems;
- knowledge of the skill terminology used in the labour market and in educational institutions;
- knowledge of assessment criteria and performance evaluation.

COM informed members that three experts have been appointed following these criteria: Mr David Hunter, Ms Claudia Plaimauer and Mr Jens Bjornavold. The selection process of a fourth expert is currently ongoing.

COM also presented how the quality assurance process will work and confirmed that the transversal skills currently existing in ESCO will be integrated into the new hierarchy. The quality assurance process will allow members to provide their feedback through the MAI community forum.

Main points during the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Members underlined the importance of having specific expertise on the labour market among the selected experts.
- Members asked COM to involve the MAI in the evaluation of the work done by the experts.
- Members asked COM to establish a process allowing stakeholders to give qualitative feedback within appropriate deadlines.
- Members asked for more clarifications on the inclusion of transversal skills in the new structure and for concrete examples of such inclusion. Members suggested to the COM to foresee a process for gathering feedback from the MAI on the approach defined for the transversal skills integration in the skills pillar. Members underlined the risks of introducing different levels in the new hierarchy.
- Members asked for a tentative timing for the new structure of the skills pillar.
- Members asked COM to prepare a document outlining technical advantages and benefits of a mono-hierarchical structure of the skills pillar for applications and services using ESCO.
- Mr Kvetan expressed the willingness of CEDEFOP to test a draft version of the hierarchy.

COM clarified the approach for transversal skills and the distinction between transversal skills and contextualized skills. COM will further reflect on the role of transversal skills and will provide the MAI with concrete examples, in a future document.

COM confirmed that it aims at concluding the work by mid-2019.

Operational follow-up:

- COM to draft a document explaining the advantages of a mono-hierarchical structure in the skills pillar and providing concrete examples of how transversal skills will fit into the new hierarchy.

## 2. ESCO qualifications pillar

COM presented the state of play of the study on the further development of the ESCO qualifications pillar and the main findings of two expert workshops.

The study is divided in two parts: the first part on quality assurance of private, sectoral and international qualifications to be included in the ESCO qualifications pillar, with a dedicated expert workshop that took place in June 2018; and the second part on linking the qualifications pillar to the skills pillar, with a dedicated expert workshop that took place in November 2018.

Regarding the direct inclusion of international qualifications in ESCO, the first expert workshop highlighted the need for a procedure ensuring trust in the qualifications included in ESCO and avoiding the risk of fake or useless qualifications. Experts agreed on the importance of an accreditation process with external quality assurance and stressed the potential role of the European Accreditation Body and of national accreditation bodies in this regard.

In the second workshop, experts discussed the options available for linking learning outcomes to the ESCO skills: human editing, high-end artificial intelligence and the use of semantic technologies such as natural language processing (NLP). Experts analyzed the results of piloting eight qualifications from two Member States and the proposal presented by the contractor of an automated approach based on methods for natural language processing (NLP), involving some degree of human intervention to identify errors.

Main points during the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Mr. Zoltan Paktai from EURES clarified how qualifications are used in EURES to extract non-experience related skills for CVs preparation.
- Members underlined that similar qualifications can lead to different skills according to the country where they are issued, and asked COM to take this aspect into consideration when assessing different options.
- Members asked COM if ESCO occupations were mapped to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-F).
- Members recommended taking into consideration different languages during testing as this might impact the quality of the results. Members underlined the need to ensure that machine learning is quality assured for all languages.
- Members proposed that the final validation of outcomes is done by national awarding bodies, as owners of the qualifications.
- Members asked about the impact of the work on structuring the skills pillar on the further development of the qualifications pillar.
- Members asked if regulated professions were specifically considered during the study.
- Members asked about the number of qualifications to map, the frequency of their maintenance and the effort required to update the linking.

COM confirmed that the study indicated an approach mixing machine learning and human control was likely to obtain the best results and avoid errors.

COM clarified that national differences in relations between skills and qualifications do not have an impact on the work done, which aims at providing transparency rather than any sort of harmonisation.

COM confirmed that only skills and knowledge will be mapped to ISCED-F.

COM confirmed that the testing was conducted against ESCO skills in English and that other languages will be considered in the near future.

COM confirmed that final national validation (by awarding bodies or other) of the link between skills and learning outcomes should be foreseen. .

COM confirmed that regulated professions were not subject to specific analysis in this exercise.

COM estimated that some tens of thousands of qualifications would be linked with ESCO skills and explained that updates to qualifications in ESCO are made directly by Member States through the Qualifications Database Register.

COM clarified that a structured skills pillar will benefit also the future development of the qualifications pillar.

COM mentioned the ESCO mapping platform as an example of functioning machine learning and appropriate mix of AI technology and human interaction.

### **3. Continuous improvement of ESCO (feedback mechanism)**

COM presented the work done for the setup of a structured stakeholder feedback mechanism.

COM informed members about the different online fora that will be set up and provided an overview of the process for identifying the appropriate technical solution. COM proposed four community fora dedicated to ESCO implementers, to ESCO domain experts, to the Member States authorities and to the MAI.

COM provided members with an overview of the different functionalities supported by the selected software component.

COM provided an overview of the proposed criteria for selecting domain experts and implementers.

COM informed members that the community fora will be ready by the beginning of 2019.

Main points during the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Members asked for clarifications about how the modifications proposed in the fora will be processed and about the role of the MAI in this regard.
- Members underlined the importance of balancing the involvement of employers' and employees' organizations in the domain expert forum.
- Members underlined the importance of social partners and public employment services at national level and their potential role in different fora.
- Members recommended involving regulatory bodies as domain experts.
- Members asked for clarifications about the notification system and the log in procedure.
- Members asked if multi access to different fora will be allowed.
- Members recommended displaying the fora in a dedicated section of the ESCO portal.
- Members asked COM if it plans to create a general forum open to all organizations and stakeholders working with ESCO.

- Members underlined the importance of an active moderation of the fora.

COM clarified that the proposed modifications will be processed according to the type of change required. In case of major updates, proposed modifications will fall into the process for the release of ESCO v1.1. In case of minor changes, COM will present a list of proposed modifications to the MAI for further discussion before adopting any decision.

COM will reflect on the possibility to add a fifth community forum dedicated to all organizations working with ESCO.

COM confirmed the log in procedure via the ECAS account.

COM confirmed that the ESCO team will actively moderate the fora in order to promote an active discussion. COM clarified that the location of the fora depends on the technical possibilities of the ESCO portal.

COM confirmed that it will seek a good balance between representation of employers and employees and between European and national level.

COM confirmed that it will involve regulatory bodies in the fora.

#### Operational follow-up:

- COM to involve regulatory bodies in the fora.
- COM to explore a different location of the fora in the ESCO portal.

#### **4. Measuring the success of ESCO**

##### **Results from ESCO business KPIs- EURES**

COM presented the results from the business KPIs (dashboard #2, use of ESCO v.0 in EURES). Results are based on free text search on the EURES portal among job vacancies and refer to the period June 2014 /September 2018.

COM informed members that the results of the quality KPIs on the conceptual and terminological coverage of ESCO (dashboard #4) are expected in the first quarter of 2019.

Main points during the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Mr. Vladimir Kvetan confirmed that Cedefop will investigate how to share data with the ESCO team, avoiding data travel.

##### **Strategy on how to collect implementers' feedback**

COM presented to members the strategy for collecting implementers' feedback.

COM clarified the distinction between implementers and end users. Feedback from ESCO end users is collected indirectly through the ESCO implementers, while feedback from implementers is collected through interviews and study visits.

COM informed members that it will perform four study visits by March 2019. The first study visit would involve Textkernel on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2018.

Visits aim at getting a more in-depth understanding of how ESCO is used in labour market services, at assessing how well ESCO is performing using defined metrics and at getting any additional feedback. COM will provide a detailed report for each study visit: results of the study visit will be used to update current metrics and will flow into the KPI dashboard.

COM presented in detail the different metrics to collect feedback and asked the MAI for suggestions and recommendations.

Main points during the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Members recommended sharing questions with the implementers before the visit.
- Members recommended analyzing feedback received according to the country and to the language provided using ESCO.
- Members recommended looking also at qualifications and training opportunities using ESCO.
- Members recommended performing visits also to public employment services. Mr. Tibor Kovacs invited the European Commission to visit the Hungarian public employment service, which is planning to use ESCO in its web portal.
- Members asked for clarifications on the purpose of the presented metrics.
- Mrs. Cecile Ramombordes recommended further metrics used by Monster to measure the percentage of relevance of matches.
- Mr. Ulrich Scharf from Skilllab recommended a close look at specific terms which could be misinterpreted by users.
- The representative from EURES underlined the difficulty in evaluating the use of ESCO when different taxonomies are used in the same service and in ensuring that employers use the ESCO terminology for drafting job vacancies.
- The representative from EURES invited COM to take a closer look at EURES/ESCO experience so far.
- The representative from EURES also introduced the current use of ESCO for individual CV editing in the EURES portal.
- Members underlined that the uptake of ESCO by private employment services members of the EURES network still represents a challenge.

Operational follow-up:

- COM to visit public employment services after the start of the mapping process.
- COM to share questions with implementers prior to the visit through a dedicated template.
- COM to further explore EURES/ESCO experience.
- COM to draft a note explaining the purpose of this exercise and the usage of the metrics.
- COM to further refine the metrics following the advices received by the MAI.

### **Presentation by VDAB**

Mrs. Gerd Goetschalckx presented to members and COM the approach used by VDAB to collect feedback on the services provided and to measure client satisfaction. Feedback focuses not only on the

content of the classification but also on the quality of the service provided and on the trust users have in the system.

VDAB receives informal feedback from stakeholders and uses surveys to receive feedback from job seekers, employers and partners. VDAB also has in place an official complaint procedure a.o. for its job matching service.

User satisfaction of matching services of individual clients is measured by

- Surveys organized by VDAB or in cooperation with universities or other national authorities related to the labour market.
- In this context the number, relevance and accuracy of the matching results provided are crucial.
- A mixed team of business and IT experts follows this process and defines elements of improvement.

The satisfaction of partners using our open services (a.o. automated matching) is monitored by a dedicated team of 2 full time experts.

They assure that everything related to the services works well, and also follow closely the correct use, and protection of the client information (e.g. CV's) and this in line with the GDPR.

Main points during the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- COM asked about specific metrics used by VDAB to measure client satisfaction.
- COM asked about specific feedback on the taxonomy used by VDAB.

Mrs. Gerd Goetschalckx clarified that specific feedback on the taxonomy are received informally via different channels. In addition there are workshops and discussions with the respective sector organisations to discuss update of the content of the taxonomy. The focus is on the relevance of a specific concept rather than on its formulation for which we follow a set of guidelines and procedures defined in co-operation with all the Belgian PES.

Mrs. Gerd Goetschalckx mentioned the use of Google analytics to measure stakeholders' activities.

### **ESCO implementers use case: presentation by Skilllab**

COM introduced the case of Skilllab as an example of organisations implementing ESCO.

Mr. Ulrich Scharf, founder of Skilllab, presented the Skilllab project, a micro service dedicated to facilitate the integration of refugees, migrants and other disadvantaged groups into the European labour

market. Mr. Scharf provided an in-depth technical presentation about how the ESCO data model is used to create transparency around an individual's skills and underlined the benefits of using the ESCO skills and occupations database in their services.

During the subsequent discussion, members discussed how to ensure the protection of individuals' data when sharing personal information with municipalities and other potential employers.

Operational follow-up:

- COM to visit Skilllab to obtain more information on its the use of ESCO.

## **5. ESCO communication activities**

COM presented different communication products to further encourage the use of ESCO. These products can be used by stakeholders and are available on the ESCO portal. COM also informed members about past and future events where ESCO will be discussed. COM played a testimonial video featuring the ESCO experience of the Public Employment Service of Iceland.

Operational follow-up:

- COM to share in the online fora flash reports of events where ESCO is involved.
- COM to inform members of the Member States Working Group on ESCO about invitations or requests to present ESCO at national level.

## **6. ESCO in EURES**

COM reported on the conclusions of the first training webinar on the EURES mapping process. COM provides technical support to Member States in the form of a mapping platform, three different manuals -an ESCO implementation manual, a manual on the technical standards and formats necessary for the operation of the EURES Common IT Platform and a mapping platform user manual- all of them available on the ESCO portal, a helpdesk, webinar training sessions and country visits to Member States upon request.

COM clarified that two questionnaires on the training for mapping to ESCO or replacing the national, regional and sectoral classifications with ESCO according to the EURES Regulation EU 2016/589 and on the set up of a mapping project on the ESCO mapping platform were sent to Member States prior to the webinar.

COM provided members with examples of the most frequently asked questions and with the list of Members States participating in the webinar.

Main points during the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Mr. Ulrich Scharf asked about the definition of mapping and the legal nature of the mapping exercise.
- Members recommended consulting national statistical offices to verify the correspondence between mapping tables used to map national classifications to ISCO 08 and the mapping tables to be produced in the context of the EURES regulation.
- Members asked how COM will deal with misplacements or errors in the mapping exercise.



COM clarified that mapping is referred to as the process for creating correspondence between two classifications. COM also clarified that the mapping process represents a legal obligation for the Member States under the EURES Regulation. COM clarified that in case of misplaced occupations or errors in the mapping exercise Member States can email the dedicated helpdesk and receive tailored support.

Operational follow-up:

- COM to upload the questionnaires and the updated list of FAQs on the ESCO portal.
- COM to share with the MAI the list of nominated national contact points.

## **7. Continuous improvement of ESCO (taxonomy)**

### **Preparing the scope of ESCO v1.1**

The presentation on planning the scope of ESCO v.1.1 was not given due to time constraints. It will be presented at the next MAI meeting.

### **Information from David Hunter on the revision of ISCO 08**

Mr David Hunter informed members about the outcomes of the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians organised by the ILO. MAI discussion covered the challenges and opportunities related to the revision of ISCO 08.

## **8. MAI work programme 2019**

COM presented the draft work programmes for 2019 of the Member States Working Group on ESCO and the MAI. Regarding the work programme of the MAI, COM specified that four meetings are currently foreseen for 2019.

COM asked members for feedbacks and comments on the proposed topics.

During the subsequent discussion, members recommend placing a bigger focus on NQFs in the joint meeting of the ESCO MWG and the EQF AG.

Operational follow-up:

- COM to inform EQF National Contact Points of the proposed joint meeting between the EQF AG and the ESCO MSWG on 6 February 2019 (tbc).

## **Annex 1**

List of present members:

- Harold Alison
- Ravaioli Simone

- Kopyt Marek
- Cerk Tina
- Kreher Wolfgang
- Mirski Peter
- Flaka Katerina
- Ramombordes Cecile
- Szebeni Kinga
- Sundin Kenneth OE
- Kikute Lelde
- Valk Sarah
- Goetschalckx Gerd
- Bakker Marcel
- Hunter David
- Triganza Clyde
- Kozovska Kornelia
- Kvetan Vladimir
- Van der Sanden Karin
- Franco Lopes Ana
- Kovacs Tibor Rudolf
- Postavaru Nicolae

Excused members:

- Bird Tony
- Mrsic Leo
- Ulovec Martin
- Kozakova Diana
- Messori Veronica

List of guests:

- Ulrich Scharf - Skilllab
- Zoltan Paktai – EURES