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MINUTES

5th meeting of the ESCO Maintenance Committee

19-20 September 2012

Hotel Marriott, Brussels

1. Opening of the meeting

Mr Tony BIRD chaired the meeting.

The updated agenda of the 3rd meeting of the ESCO Maintenance Committee (MAI) was adopted.

The minutes of the 4th meeting of the MAI were adopted with the following changes:

- *p.3 Euroccupations is not an NOC (National Occupational Classification) but a European database of occupations, it is linked to NOCs but it is not an NOC;*
- *p.5 the wording "unstructured data" needs to be clarified: the MAI committee suggested to add a footnote to the minutes and to add the term in the glossary;*
- *p.7 Ms Judith De Ruijter was present at the last meeting.*

The agenda for the 5th meeting of the ESCO Maintenance Committee (MAI) was approved.

Actions to be taken:

— The ESCO Secetariat (SEC) will adapt the minutes of the 4th meeting and upload them to Sinapse.

2. Release of ESCO v0

Mr Martin Le Vrang gave a presentation of the timeline for the release of ESCO v0.

The MAI would like to be informed of the various steps that are carried out during the development of ESCO v0. It therefore requests the SEC to provide the following reports:

i. List and structure of transversal competences as developed by the Cross-sector Reference Group;
ii. Methodology of the ISCO upgrade and a description of unclear cases and EUROSTAT's involvement;
iii. Report summarising the process of the manual part of the link change and a description of problematic cases;
iv. A list of ESCO occupations sorted by ISCO-08 occupation group for further use by Eurostat or national statistical offices;
v. Report on the grouping of skills/competences into the 25 DISCO skills/competences groups and a description of problematic cases;
vi. Report summarising of the translation quality review carried out by DGT;
vii. List and structure of the qualifications identified for implementation in ESCO v0.

The MAI clarified that the main purpose of these reports is to give formal feedback and to learn for the development of ESCO v1. While there will be no "formal" endorsement of the various steps, the MAI might in exceptional cases ask for changes in the processes.

Actions to be taken:

— The SEC will upload all reports to Sinapse as early as possible.

3. ESCO data model for the qualifications pillar

Mr Jens Bjornavold gave a presentation on the proposal of the ESCO Secretariat for the data model of the qualifications pillar. The MAI went through the paper provided by the SEC and discussed each of the data fields that will describe the qualifications. The results of this discussion are summarised in the following:

i. Qualifications titles

The MAI agreed not to translate the titles of the Qualifications.

ii. Qualifications groups

The MAI agreed to use hierarchical relationships of qualifications with qualification groups to develop the hierarchy of qualifications. However, there is not yet an agreement which groups will

be used. Ms Ana Franco Lopez suggested not using ISCED to group qualifications, as there is a new classification called "*Fields of education and training*" which is still under revision. Mr Bjornavold informed the MAI that the SEC is considering different approaches and also looking at other sources for grouping/organising qualifications. The SEC will prepare a proposal for the qualification grouping.

iii. EQF level

The MAI agreed that the EQF level should be indicated where possible.

iv. Title of the awarding body

The MAI agreed that the title of the awarding body should be included. However, it suggested that clear eligibility criteria for awarding bodies should be established to avoid ESCO giving soft recognition to unfit/fake private certificates. Only qualifications meeting these criteria will be included in ESCO.

Mr Bjornavold suggested that the SEC would provide a proposal on such criteria.

v. Geographical location

The MAI questioned the added value of the field "Geographical location".

It is not indeed very clear but Mr Bjornavold suggested we could test it in ESCO v0. The MAI advised to change the name of the field into "*Location where the qualification is being awarded*".

vi. Area of use

Mr Bjornavold underlined that this field can be useful because it helps acknowledging the transversal nature of some qualifications.

Ms Franco Lopez asked what could be the added value: it would be like having a 4th pillar on economic activity.

Ms Gerd Goetschalckx warned that this data would be extremely difficult to keep up to date.

Mr Anders Ekeland was concerned that this field could complicate the taxonomy and he doubted it would ever become operative.

The MAI decided to change the title of the field into "purpose".

vii. Relationship to occupations

The MAI decided to describe this relationship through a free text metadata. The ambition is to come up with 3-4 categories for the development of ESCO v1 that are based on the experience with ESCO v0.

viii. Relationship to skills and competences

The MAI considered that learning outcomes should play a role in this link but the reality is that there is a gap between learning outcomes and skills/competences. The MAI suggested that the Reference Groups (REF) identify this gap.

In ESCO v0 the relationship between skills/competences and qualifications would be described with free text metadata.

Mr O'Connor added that the qualification pillar proposed lacks a time dimension (legacy qualifications, qualifications that expire, etc.). He suggested that the qualification pillar should have a data field that gives information about timing.

Actions to be taken:

- The SEC will make a proposal about the qualification grouping and share it with the MAI;
- The SEC will make a proposal about the criteria for including awarding bodies and share it with the MAI;
- The SEC will update the draft guidelines to reflect the decisions of the MAI and upload them to Sinapse.

4. Wageindicator and Euroccupations

Ms De Ruijther gave a presentation on the Wageindicator web portal. Wageindicator provides wage related information, including salary checks by country. It also includes information on labour law, minimum wages, vacancies and education opportunities.

Ms Kea Tijdens presented Euroccupations, a database of 1 500 - 2 000 occupations in the languages of the participating 8 European countries.

5. Revising the content for ESCO v1

Ms Katrien Vander Kuylen gave the MAI an update on the last introductory meeting and on the progress of the established Reference Groups. The MAI asked the SEC to share the minutes of the last introductory meeting.

Mr Le Vrang briefed the MAI on the status of developing the ESCO Guidelines. The SEC aims at integrating different documents in only one document, in order to make it easier to circulate them and approve changes. This document will include the overview of the three pillars, the ESCO vision, the revision process and other papers. The SEC will share this document with the MAI as soon as possible.

In accordance with the agenda, the MAI discussed the use of levels in the relationship between skills/competences and occupations. The 3 options identifies in the last MAI meeting are: i) use the EQF descriptors, ii) use a numerical descriptor (e.g. from 1 to 100), or iii) use words describing the relationship (e.g. frequency, importance).

- *Ms Goetschalckx expressed the feeling that this dimension is not very relevant at the beginning of the recruitment but only at a later stage in the recruitment process;*
- *Ms Franco Lopez suggested – instead of using levels – describing competences by expressing the levels in the PT;*
- *Mr O'Connor saw levels as mainly related to employers and categories such as basic, intermediate and advanced are quite straightforward for them.*

Mr Bird summarised the outcome of the discussion: The MAI is not in favour of using the EQF levels because that could lead to mismatches and this would create confusion. A numerical scale could be difficult to implement, therefore this would not be a practical solution. Instead descriptors in words would be easy for the user to be looked at. In conclusion, the MAI decided to use words descriptors in common language.

Actions to be taken:

- The Secretariat will share the minutes of the last introductory meeting with the MAI;
- The Secretariat will include in the Guidelines that the relationship between occupations and skills/competences will be described with words descriptors in a common language;
- The Secretariat will share the Guidelines with the MAI as soon as they are finalised;
- The MAI will continue the discussion concerning levels in Sinapse.

6. Interoperability

Mr Vito Spinelli presented the European Interoperability Framework and how ESCO fits in this strategic framework.

Ms Goetschalckx presented an overview of PES IT services and how they are used to achieve interoperability. She also summarised the results of the Interoperability workshop she had with the ESCO Secretariat. The participants to the workshop decided to implement a test project in order to assess the performance of ESCO as an interoperability tool. A summary of the testing approach will be uploaded on Sinapse.

Actions to be taken:

- The Secretariat will upload a summary of the interoperability testing approach on Synapse.

7. Communication

The MAI discussed about the communications with the REF. This topic is very important for the upcoming Communication meeting which will also involve the Board and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the REF.

The MAI would like to be informed on the work of the REF. This information should regard the process rather than the outputs.

The MAI raised the issue that the timing of the work of the REF should be monitored in relation with the overall time plan of the project. Therefore, it decided that the reporting template should include a field on timing. However, reporting on timing should also look at the lifecycle of the REF and the tasks on which they are working. As a result, the MAI agreed that it will work on a reporting template for the REF. Such template should be based on a *milestones approach*. The Secretariat will define what these milestones are. Based on these milestones, the MAI will identify the timing for reporting.

The MAI agreed that *quality* is a crucial issue. The reporting template needs to take this aspect into account. Quality issues are related to the sources REF are using (quality and quantity, who will evaluate them?). Reporting should also be done on the revision process, e.g. how they produced the sectoral breakdown and how they revised the prototype.

Taking into account the issues described above, the MAI decided it should read the minutes of the REF meetings. For this purpose, it was suggested that each member of the MAI takes responsibility for one REF. It still has to be decided how the MAI members will interact with the REF (e-mail?

Sinapse? Replying to the minutes?). For the moment, the focus will be kept on the reporting template.

Actions to be taken:

- The SEC will prepare a draft reporting template and present it to the MAI. The template will include aspects of timing and quality.

8. ROME (Répertoire Opérationnel des Métiers et des Emplois)

Ms Valérie Goulet presented ROME, the French classification of occupations and the job matching system of the French PES.

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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
Goetschalckx, Gerd	VDAB, Co-ordinator R&D
O'Connor, John	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Development officer
Goulet, Valerie	Pôle emploi, Pole ROME Adviser
Bird, Tony	Lantra Sector Skills Council, Head of Business Development
De Ruijter, Judith	AO Consult, Senior researcher/advisor
Mijangos, Garbine	EC/DGT, Lead translator for the ESCO project, European Commission
Diekmann, Knut	Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce, Director Principals of Further Vocational Education Policy
Šlekytė, Donata	Lithuanian Labour Exchange at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Deputy Head of Labour Resources Division

Permanent observers to the ESCO Maintenance Committee:

Franco Lopez, Ana	EC/ESTAT, Head of section, European Commission

ESCO Secretariat

Le Vrang, Martin	ESCO Secretariat (DG EMPL)
Niedra, Ginta	ESCO Secretariat (TenForce)
Vander Kuylen, Katrien	ESCO Secretariat (TenForce)
Spinelli, Vito	ESCO Secretariat (Tenforce)
Nomden, Koen	ESCO Secretariat (DG EAC)
Bjornavold, Jens	ESCO Secretariat (Cedefop)

Excused

Wass, Gunnar	PES Sweden, Senior handling officer
Scatoli, Carlo	ESCO Secretariat (DG EAC)
Blažíčková, Jolana	TREXIMA, Head of HRD and Labour Market Department
Nordhaus, Hans Ulrich	DGB, Member of the Executive Board