

STUDY VISIT

*ECVET testing in the tourism and hospitality sector:
the experience of the Colline Astigiane Vocational Training Agency (AFP)*
Asti - Agliano Terme, 20 March 2013

REPORT

On 20 March last, the study visit took place on *ECVET testing in the tourism and hospitality sector: the experience of the Colline Astigiane Vocational Training Agency*, promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies together with ISFOL within the framework of the project "Centre for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation. A Network among Mediterranean Countries and the Southern Italian Regions for Developing Training and Employment Systems".

The study visit is one of the outcomes of the workshop *Instruments for Mobility and Employability: the European System of Credits for Vocational Education and Training*, held in Naples on 8 November 2012 within the framework of the same project.

The purpose of the visit was to illustrate, to experts from Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia, AFP's testing of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) in the tourism and hospitality sector carried out under the project F.A.N.T.E. - Life Long Learning Programme - LDV 2007-2013.

The morning was devoted to the presentation of the ECVET experience by the actors involved followed by a study visit to the facilities and services of the Vocational Training Agency (AFP) in Asti and Agliano Terme.

Present:

For the Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali

Anna Melinelli, Divisione I, Direzione Generale Politiche Attive e Passive del Lavoro

For the Regione Piemonte

Nadia Cordero, Direzione regionale Istruzione, formazione professionale e lavoro, settore Standard formativi - Qualità ed orientamento professionale

Alberto Gianluigi Re, Direzione regionale Cultura, Turismo e Sport

For ISFOL

Antonella Attanasio, Responsabile Progetto Cooperazione transnazionale

Sabina Anderini, Progetto Cooperazione transnazionale

Laura D'Alessandro, Progetto Cooperazione transnazionale

Giovanna de Mottoni, Progetto Cooperazione transnazionale

Anna Tito, Progetto Cooperazione transnazionale

For the Agenzia di Formazione Professionale delle Colline Astigiane

Lucia Barbarino

Matteo Gazzarata

Secondino Aluffi

For the Associazione Albergatori e Ristoratori Astigiani
Roberto Ferretto

For the Università di Torino
Roberto Trincherò

For Jordan
Bassel Al-Dabbas, Vocational Training Corporation
Jehad Almasandh, Vocational Training Corporation
Jamal Amireh, Vocational Training Corporation

For Lebanon
Denise Dahrouj, Ministry of Labour, Chief of Department for International Affairs

for Tunisia
Ons Boughattas, Conseillère des Services Publics -Chef de service de la Coopération Bilatérale, Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle et de l'Emploi
Karim Boumhallès, Directeur de la Coopération Internationale, Agence Tunisienne de la Formation Professionnelle
Mounir El Hammami, Ingénieur de formation au Centre National de Formateurs et d'Ingénierie de Formation
Mohamed Seïfallah Hababou, Responsable de la Coopération Internationale, Ministère du Tourisme
Nidhal Jedda, Chef du Protocole, Ministère du Tourisme
Hayet Soula, Directrice à l'Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant

Also participating in the meeting were sector representatives of C.I.A.C. Formazione di Ciriè (To) and of the Centro di Formazione Professionale Turistico Alberghiero "Miretti" di Varazze (SV).

The meeting was opened and moderated by **Matteo Gazzarata**, AFP expert and coordinator of the Project LDV F.A.N.T.E for promoting the mobility of young people in initial vocational training through internships in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

After greetings by the AFP C.E.O. **Secondino Aluffi**, **Nadia Cordero** of the Piedmont Region presented the regional system of training standards. After having described the process, initiated in 2006, through which the Region created the system, Cordero underlined the importance of the assessable credit system, that is the "stock" of what individuals have learnt in formal, non formal and informal contexts, citing legislative decree 13/2013 defining the pillars of the national skills certification system. She then illustrated the potential of ECVET for the tourism and hospitality sector and the role played by the Piedmont Region in the F.A.N.T.E. project.

The Principal of the Training Agency **Lucia Barbarino** then briefly illustrated the history of the agency, its mission, its training under the compulsory education scheme and the Teaching Restaurant project, a unique experience at regional level. She also recalled the agency's investment in the international mobility of trainees, considered a highly significant experience not only for professional enrichment but also for designing shared certification tools Europe-wide and for planning programmes in line with labour market requirements. For this purpose, the participation of the Associazione di Categoria Ristoratori Albergatori Astigiani as intermediate partner was considered strategic for defining certifiable vocational skills through ECVET.

On the subject of international mobility and development of language skills, **Matteo Gazzarata** introduced the F.A.N.T.E. project - *Fostering and Teaching Entrepreneurship* – financed under the Leonardo da Vinci *Lifelong Learning Programme* and promoted by AFP in cooperation with an extensive local partnership. He pointed out that the project represented a unique opportunity for over 100 young people from the hotel school to complete their training with a four-week internship abroad, developing their language and entrepreneurial skills. In particular, he illustrated in detail the process of recognizing the credits acquired during the internship together with the role played by the partners (Regione

Piemonte, Università di Torino, Associazione albergatori e ristoratori Astigiani, foreign partners and enterprises), from the identification of learning outcomes up to the validation and recognition of the outcome of the host enterprises' evaluation. The ECVET system's problem areas and opportunities were also pointed out, both for the "promoters" of the process and for the students, pinpointing possible solutions for a better use of the system.

The mobility issue was also covered by **Roberto Ferretto**, President of the Asti Association of Hoteliers and Restaurateurs, who stressed the importance of working abroad to acquire more flexibility and responsibility and of internships in general, offering experience in different areas of the service: from the cellar to the kitchen up to the management aspects particularly useful in self-entrepreneurship.

The debate, stimulated by the foreign guests, highlighted the importance of the link with local enterprises both for practical training and for job placement and the need to develop entrepreneurial and managerial competences alongside technical skills. Another topic under discussion regarded the training of trainers, seen as a strategic component for delivering a quality training.

After the meeting, the delegation visited AFP's the teaching facilities in Asti, with particular focus on the kitchens with their cutting-edge equipment and materials. The Agliano Terme headquarters were then visited where- after lunch prepared and served by the school students – the meeting continued with an AFP presentation video and a video with testimonies of ex students, including a chef whose restaurant in Germany was awarded a star by the Michelin Guide, illustrating stories of professional success at home and abroad. There was also the testimony of a restaurateur from Caceres (Spain), who for some years has been taking AFP students for work experience..

The meeting ended with great satisfaction on everyone's part both for the interest of the topics dealt with and for the excellence of the facility visited .

Future Prospects

At the end of the day some ideas were put forward for cooperation with the Jordanian and Tunisian delegates which will have to be formalized. For Tunisia, the representatives of the four departments of *Ministère de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi* agreed to send some work proposals on the topic of recognition of migrants' diplomas, to be implemented within the framework of a memorandum between the Italian and Tunisian ministries.

On its part, the Tunisian Ministry of Tourism hopes to promote interactions with Italy on the subject of tourism professions and tourism organization in general. A study has been launched in this area which also involves representatives of the Piedmont Region to develop joint actions to submit to the Tunisian Ministry.

The Jordanian representatives expressed interest in an exchange of information with AFP on the topic of training trainers.