(English version)

Question for written answer E-002521/25
to the Commission
Marie Toussaint (Verts/ALE)
(23 June 2025)

Subject: Career guidance and pathways available to pupils (first question)

Against the backdrop of the green and digital transitions, and a greater quest for meaning in our professional lives, it is vital to strengthen vocational education and training (VET) programmes. However:

— national training offers continue to be fragmented, limiting professional and social mobility between Member States;

— the transition from secondary to higher education in vocational pathways lacks fluidity and mutual recognition.

The Council Recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience stresses that it is important for the pathways to be continuous and open. The Pact for Skills and the education agenda aim to make training systems more flexible. A quality jobs roadmap is currently being prepared.

With a view to strengthening VET and ensuring that every young person has a clear and fair career path that is tailored to the current challenges:

1. What common European criteria does the Commission plan to include in national training programmes to ensure that apprenticeships are more compatible and there is greater mobility between Member States?

2. Is there likely to be a formal link between secondary VET and higher education modules (ECTS, aligned modular units, etc.) in future revisions of the programmes?

Submitted: 23.6.2025

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(12 August 2025)

The Commission acknowledges the importance of strengthening vocational education and training (VET) systems in the EU and improving professional and social mobility.

Regarding European criteria in national training frameworks, the 2018 Council Recommendation on a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships ([1]) aims to ensure that apprenticeships meet minimum quality requirements. It also refers to enhancing opportunities for mobility of apprentices.

In addition, the Council Recommendation Europe on the Move ([2]) (2024) provides policy guidance on apprentice mobility. Finally, the Commission supports Member States and stakeholders through the European Alliance for Apprenticeships in establishing quality apprenticeships and enhancing the mobility of apprentices.

On the link between VET and higher education, the recent Union of Skills communication ([3]) stresses the importance of strengthening VET programmes.

This includes addressing the challenges of fragmented national training offers and supporting smoother transitions between VET and higher education, in line with the 2020 Council Recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience ([4]), which emphasises the importance of modular VET curricula to support smoother transitions for learners to higher education.

These objectives will be reinforced by the forthcoming EU VET Strategy. The Commission is also exploring the launch of a European VET diploma to support mobility and the recognition of learning outcomes across borders.

Furthermore, the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) Users' guide, which is currently being revised, will also address VET, where relevant.

([1]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2018_153_R_0001.
([2]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C_202403364.
([3]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A52025DC0090.
([4]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2020_417_R_0001.