

Italian Reflections on the first CORVET workshop in Paderborn Germany

CORVET Project 1st to 3rd November 2011

The CORVET Project involves five institutions from 4 different countries: Germany, Italy, UK and Turkey. Its aim is to work on Educational system and career orientation.

The first step of the CORVET- project took place with the workshop in the lovely city of Paderborn, Germany from 1st to 3rd November 2011.

The meeting started on the 1st of November with a pleasant and informal dinner at “Le Petit Galerie”, a quiet French restaurant situated in the city center. All participants were present and it was a perfect occasion to know each other creating a cooperative atmosphere of trust.

On the way to the restaurant, it was already clear that all participants were eager to exchange information about themselves, their cultures, their jobs and expectation.

The day after, the 2nd November, at 9 o'clock all partners were ready to work.

The appointment was at Paderborn University in the Building N meeting room number 4.

The coordinator of CORVET, Prof. Marc Beutner, introduced the aim of the project outlining the objectives and responsibilities of each partner. We spent all day discussing the project cycle, aims, topics and phases of CORVET as well as the dissemination strategy.

Part of the day was dedicated to the presentations of educational systems in each partner country with special focus on the VET-systems. This kind of presentation gave partners the possibility to compare differences and similarity.

The biggest similarity pointed out is that all countries have a compulsory education either for 10 or 12 years.

Compared with the others, the most efficient VET system seems to be the German one, which is quite unique, competitive and really flexible. Learners in fact, can transfer between the vocational and academic systems quite freely depending upon ability, interests and specific examinations. While there may be differences and variations in the Landers (regions), the possibility, or better the acknowledged right, to transfer between the systems in any region, should a learner and their family physically move their residence, is guaranteed by the law.

This high level of flexibility, can be one of the reasons for the lowest unemployment levels in Germany compared to other partners in the CORVET partnership – the Italian one first.

One of the main differences among the educational systems of the partners involved in the Project is the age in which students have to make a choice regarding their future and their educational career.

In UK and Turkey, learners are faced with options after the primary school; UK's 11-Plus examination decides for a learner the type of secondary education a student can follow.

In Turkey, learners from primary stage have three distinct options: academic institutions which prepare students for higher education, vocational and general education institutions where learners are prepared for either higher or professional education and finally the third option is the vocational institutions which give students for vocations or self employment.

In Italy, the moment in which learners have to face and analyze options regarding their future lives comes later in educational life.

Italians face this moment at the age of 14, once completed the Lower Secondary Education. Students have two possible options: enter into a Lyceè where they will be trained towards a First Degree or a technical or vocational institution which can lead to professional qualifications and will introduce students to the labour market.

During this first day of work, the Vice President of Paderborn University Prof. Dr. Bernd Frick, formally welcomed the group.

He introduced the city of Paderborn and its University which is quite young. But it has already become a leading educational Institution in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Germany.

As one of the core topic of the department is the development and enforcement of VET, one of the main point in Prof. Frick's speech was to encourage more international co-operation among the university world and external stakeholders. CORVET Coordinator introduced to the whole group the BCSW server and the Webpage; a dedicated tool, which has the aim of facilitate cooperation among the partners giving them the possibility to work independently, posting reports and other information and also to spread results. The project will also be shared and disseminated among members and partner EU countries via the European Shared Treasure (EST) network.

The work day was closed in the best possible way with an amusing cultural city tour of Paderborn. We visited the historical cathedral and had a detailed walk around the historic center guided by a friendly guide who explained us the

development of Paderborn through the centuries. The evening ended in a typical German restaurant "Ratskeller" where we had the possibility to eat a very special dinner and drinking good German beer.

On the 3rd of November, early in the morning, the workshop meeting continued with the discussion started the day before. The topic of that morning was career orientation in the country partners of CORVET Project.

Also in that item seem to be similarities between the different countries.

In UK and German approach, career orientation is very important for the development of pupils / students possibilities; as well as in Italian and Turkish approaches provide good structures based on pupil's skills.

Starting from the important role played by Career Orientation in each country of the partnership, we put a very good basis for further discussions on a common European approach to work on.

The first successful meeting officially ended at 11.30 am among great satisfaction and smiling faces. Guided by Marc each partner had the possibility to give a feedback of the first workshop and input for the next meetings planned for march 2012 in Turkey and September 2012 in UK.

Happy to work with such a propositive team, we are looking forward for next future meetings.