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Since the beginning of the economic crisis, VET has been increasingly in the spotlight as one possible contributor to a faster recovery, increased growth and competitiveness and more jobs. The need for high-quality VET, providing the right skills for learners and for the labour market, is firmly recognised. In the meantime, the EQAVET Recommendation has reached its fourth year of implementation, and the time for stocktaking has arrived.

Has the framework helped increase the quality of VET? Has it helped VET graduates increase their employability? What is the state of play on quality assurance in VET in Europe? The Commission will report by the end of this year on the implementation of the EQAVET framework in Member States and, at the same time, try to give an overview of the existing quality assurance arrangements used in the VET sector in Europe. For this, we have made extensive use of the rich information provided by the EQAVET secretariat survey. We have also based our work on an external evaluation of EQAVET implementation, about which you find more details in this newsletter. A study was conducted on mapping quality assurance instruments in CVET in 10 Member States with EQAVET and this work also helped inform the reporting exercise. Finally we have drawn on Cedefop research. Not surprisingly, the

preliminary results show progress but acknowledge that there is still room for improvement in the development of quality assured VET.

Moreover, we are living in a fast evolving world, experiencing huge technological developments with tools used today that were still unknown a few years ago. These new informatics and communication tools have changed our ways of working, making simple occupations profoundly more complex. These technologies have enabled the provision of Massive Open Online Courses that are driving change in teaching, learning, assessing, recognising skills and in the way knowledge is acquired. We need to keep pace with these changes. New studies (including on apprenticeships and the survey of adult skills, or PIAAC) are also providing interesting outcomes; VET graduates can score better than

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higher education graduates depending on the quality of training provided. Learning on the job proves to be successful not only for knowledge and know-how but also for developing the soft skills needed for work. Borders are blurring, not only between educational subsectors but also between the world of education and the world of work.

EQAVET has promoted dialogue between countries and offers a broader approach than just an 'accreditation/inspection/self-assessment' type of checklist for quality assurance. Indeed, we need to go beyond the 'tick-box' approach to develop a genuine shared culture of quality

assurance. Challenges remain ahead and notably one which is especially complex: the creation of a European area for skills and qualifications. But more about this in the next newsletter. With best wishes for a successful conclusion to a busy year, and fresh energy for our common projects in 2014.



Update on the Commission report to the European Parliament on the implementation of the Recommendation –

an article by Sophie Weisswange, European Commission, DG Education and Training, and chair of the EQAVET network

The Commission is about to adopt its first report on the implementation of the EQAVET Recommendation¹. It will summarise the experience gained during the four years of implementation and will present to the Commission proposals for the way ahead. It also gives a snapshot of progress of quality assurance in VET in the European Union.



Sophie Weisswange, DG Education and Training - European Commission, and chair of the EQAVET network

The report has made extensive use of the EQAVET secretariat surveys, the findings outlined in the external evaluation of the EQAVET Framework conducted by GHK, as well as the results of a mapping study of the main CVET quality assurance instruments in 10 European Countries and their comparison with EQAVET¹.

The preliminary results show that EQAVET has definitely contributed to advancing a quality culture in VET in European countries. This has been possible thanks

to extensive cooperation, the allocation of appropriate resources, expert support from the EQAVET secretariat and a high level of commitment by network members. The practical implementation of EQAVET has benefitted from well thought out operational measures like the joint elaboration of guidelines and online tools targeted at improving VET systems and VET providers.

However, EQAVET implementation so far has focused on

the IVET level in a formal setting within the VET provider institution. In the field of CVET as well as in other forms of learning, such as non-formal learning and work-based learning, there is still considerable room for improvement. This is partly explained by the nature of the stakeholders currently involved in the process, namely in its governance, which has privileged actors from the IVET schools sector, but bigger challenges lie ahead.

The flexible approach advocated in the EQAVET recommendation has facilitated its use but at the same time has reduced its potential as a common language and conceptual framework across countries. Besides, countries do not always use the quality cycle approach but rather go for classical and narrower quality assurance approaches including external/internal review.

It should also be noted that while EQAVET is quite developed on the level of (initial) VET provision, it is less developed in its certification aspect. Little attention is given to the learning outcome approach, though this approach is more typical of VET than of general education.

A clear need also emerged from the report for enhanced cooperation with other European instruments for quality assurance and transparency. In today's European society where frontiers are fading with the development of the internal market and of new communication technologies, frontiers between educational sectors also tend to blur. Permeability between the various educational sectors

¹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training, OJ C155, 8.07.2009, p.1.

should be ensured to reflect such flexibility. That is why a reflection has to be undertaken on the possible need for cross-sectoral quality assurance guidelines while keeping sector specific principles. The links between the national qualifications frameworks and the quality assurance tools for VET and education in general seem to be still quite weak. EQAVET could explore how to develop this.

Various actions could be taken following discussions with the Council and the European Parliament on the report. These would include the development of descriptors, indicators and related guidelines to better address the quality and the appropriate proficiency level of knowledge,

skills and competences acquired by learners in VET, notably geared towards a framework for quality of work-based learning and enhancement of cooperation with adult learning.

The reflection being currently undertaken on the development of a European area for skills and qualifications, and the results of the stakeholders' and public consultations that are planned in this context, will help develop such synergies. It is reassuring to see that the EQAVAET network has identified some of the areas for improvement and is already working on them.

Key findings and recommendations outlined in the external evaluation of the EQAVET Framework conducted by GHK –

an article by Daniela Ulicna and Astrid Henningsen, ICF GHK

Four years after the adoption of the EQAVET Recommendation, this evaluation took stock of progress in the implementation of this instrument. It analysed the influence of EQAVET on national quality assurance measures and systems since 2002 and assessed the relevance of EQAVET to current priorities as well as to other European instruments.

The main positive findings of this evaluation can be summarised as follows:

- Directly or indirectly, EQAVET supported changes in quality assurance systems and measures in two thirds of countries analysed.
- EQAVET objectives remain relevant in the context of European priorities and policies in the field of education and training and beyond. The theme of quality assurance in VET also remains of relevance to national developments.
- The fact that EQAVET was adopted in the form of a Recommendation strengthened the participation of countries in EQAVET and helped formalise the role of National Reference Points (NRP).
- The vast majority of countries have set up NRPs. They are hosted by relevant organisations.
- A majority of EU countries have in place approaches to improve quality assurance, even though the Recommendation is vague on what constitutes such an approach.
- European products on EQAVET are viewed positively but their use is greater when these are translated and adapted to the national context.
- The EQAVET governance structure is considered to be

efficient. The expertise of the EQAVET secretariat is welcomed.

- Of the Lifelong Learning Programme funded projects on EQAVET, the most effective are those that are led by system-level organisations in charge of quality assurance, which have the capacity to mainstream project results.

The evaluation also identified areas where further progress is needed, in particular it concluded that:

- There is currently very little evidence that EQAVET is contributing to the objective of making VET systems more transparent. The content of the EQAVET Annex 1 on quality cycle, criteria and descriptors does not lend itself easily to making national quality assurance systems transparent.
- In principle EQAVET complements other European instruments in the area of qualifications, but in practice the complementarities need to be articulated more clearly.
- While the school-based aspects of QA in VET are well covered by EQAVET, the framework does not provide specific guidance for QA of work-based learning.



- The EU-level cooperation between EQAVET and European initiatives in quality assurance in other sectors of education is not systematic.

- Not all NRPs have a clear mandate and most NRPs do not have resources of their own. The engagement of stakeholders in the national activities of NRPs is very uneven.
- The EQAVET governance would benefit from greater involvement by representatives of stakeholders and representatives of organisations which have an interest in strengthening transparency of national quality assurance measures.

Finally, the sustainability of changes induced by EQAVET is not yet clear. On one hand some countries are changing quality assurance systems by mainstreaming certain features of EQAVET. On the other hand, EQAVET does not currently have a clear lever to trigger sustainable change in provider-level approaches to quality assurance.

EQAVET Recommendation inspires the further development of quality management in Finland – Tarja Riihimäki and Leena Koski, EQAVET members from Finland, explain how the EQAVET Recommendation has developed the quality assurance system of VET in Finland

The continuous improvement of the quality of vocational education and training (VET) is a key priority in Finland. The Quality Management in VET has been developed systematically since the middle of the 1990s. The national quality assurance system (QA) of VET comprises three major elements: national steering by national educational policy, the quality assurance of VET providers and external evaluation of VET.

Each VET provider is obliged by law to evaluate the education and training it is providing and the effectiveness of the provision. VET providers are obliged to participate in the external evaluations decided by the Ministry of Education and Culture. One of the main principles in Finnish VET is that the providers have full autonomy to decide how they will put the requirements of the legislation into practice. The Ministry is steering the implementation by information (VET policy). The providers decide themselves what kind of QA systems or measures they will use.

According to the latest national evaluation on the state of quality assurance in VET in Finland (2009) one third of providers said that they have been doing systematic quality work over 10 years while one third has been involved in systematic quality work for fewer than three years. A lot of support activities have taken place in the recent years to enhance quality work at VET provider level. The ministry has supported the establishment of the regional quality networks for mutual learning, and for benchmarking on a voluntary basis. The networks are supervised by the National Board of Education. Each network consists of VET providers with a long tradition in systematic quality work as well as those just starting the work. A national network of quality developers in VET institutions has been active for several years and meets twice a year. Peer reviews have also been used successfully as a method for quality improvement and mutual learning.

The implementation of the Quality Management Recommendation for VET² is part of system level QA.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education adopted an updated version of the recommendation. The recommendation supports and encourages VET providers to develop the quality of their activities towards excellence. The recommendation is based on EQARF (EQAVET). The recommendation was prepared by the Finnish National Board of Education together with the Ministry of Education and key VET stakeholders (e.g. VET providers, social partners, teachers and students). The recommendation provides a framework for QA of different types of VET providers and all forms of IVET and CVET. It does not take a stand on quality management methods. VET providers are the main actors in implementing the recommendation. It recommends using the nine EFQM principles and the phases of planning, implementation, evaluation and further development based on the results.

The performance-based funding system is meant to ensure high quality results in VET. The system comprises performance-based funding (PBF) and the Quality Award (EFQM). PBF started in 2002 based on performance indicators, and was revised in 2011. PBF was prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture in close cooperation with VET providers, researchers, statisticians and other stakeholders. It is designed to motivate VET providers to work continuously on developing and improving their operational outcomes and the quality of education and training they are providing. Performance-based funding constitutes 3% of the overall funding for VET. The amount of performance-based funding a VET provider receives is determined by the Performance Indicator which is composed of three indicators: The Outcome Indicator³,

2 http://www.oph.fi/download/47655_quality_management_recommendation_for_vocational_education_and_training.pdf

3 The performance of the providers based on the outcomes of their students in relation to the completion of their qualifications, further studies and the

The Teacher Competence Indicator ⁴ and The Staff Development Indicator ⁵.

The Quality Award (since 2000) is an important supplemental part of the performance-based funding of Finnish VET. Assessment and evaluation of the participating organisations is based on the comprehensive evaluation of the activities of the organisation as a whole and the results achieved. There is also an annually set special theme where VET providers have to show good practice and results. To win the Quality Award, the VET provider must have a well functioning quality management system and also perform excellently on the theme. The framework used is based on the key principles of the EFQM model and the quality cycle. The participating VET providers are assessed on the basis of written applications and external assessment visits by assessment teams comprised of representatives of various stakeholder groups. During the visit, representatives of management, teaching staff, students, trainers, employers and experts are interviewed. In addition, the assessment team examines documents, information systems, facilities and equipment.

The external evaluation of VET is also governed by legislation. System level external evaluation activities are mainly executed by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council. Decisions on evaluations are made by the Ministry. The Finnish National Board of Education conducts system level external evaluations on learning outcomes in compulsory and vocational education and training.

Quality Strategy 2020

The Quality Strategy for VET was finalised in 2011. It was prepared in a working group consisting of key VET stakeholders (e.g. VET providers, social partners, teachers and students) and chaired by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The main aim was to formulate a vision and set targets for the development of quality in VET. It aims to create common principles for QM among different actors within the VET system. The quality strategy was incorporated into the Government's Development Plan for Education and Research 2011 - 2016. One of the targets was that by 2015 all VET providers should have a

obtaining of employment (the weight of the indicator is 90%)

- 4 The formal qualification level of teaching staff, obtained by measuring the percentage of formally qualified teachers among all teachers (the weight of the indicator is 7%)
- 5 The provider's financial investment in developing and maintaining the professional competence of staff, which measures the percentage of total expenditure on staff development (the weight of the indicator is 3%)

functioning Quality Assurance and Quality Development System. It was decided in the Ministry that in 2015, all VET providers would have to participate in a self-assessment of their QA systems as part of a review of the situation at national level. The evaluation is, at the moment, in a piloting phase and the criteria for the QA systems have been prepared in a working group chaired by the Ministry. Members are drawn from key stakeholders, as in the case of strategy preparation.

The Quality Strategy pointed out that the financing of VET should support and encourage VET providers to implement continuous quality improvement. The relative weight of good performance should be moderately increased in the coming years. The Ministry appointed in September 2013 a working group to further develop the financing of IVET and CVET. It will consider also the different means of increasing the performance- and quality-based factors of funding.

Stakeholders' involvement

In Finland the involvement of different stakeholders at all levels has been one of the leading principles of the development of quality assurance in VET. Stakeholders have been participating in all development activities of QA at national level and also at the provider level. This has created a quality culture at all levels of VET. The stakeholders have actively taken part e.g. in the development of the Quality Management Recommendation, the Quality Award, the Quality Strategy and Peer Review procedures and criteria. They are also important actors in the preparation of national core curricula and assessment of students e.g. in skills demonstrations. The stakeholders have different roles in QA: they are taking part in the decision-making on the QA principles and the development of QA. They are also active partners in the QA system e.g. in the assessment of skills demonstrations and skills and competence in VET in the workplace.

The Quality Strategy underpins the transparency and evidence base of the quality of VET. This is promoted by publishing the key findings relating to the quality and impact of VET so that it is available for all the key stakeholders of VET. Performance-based financing data, for instance, is published on the website of the National Board of Education. It enables VET providers, for instance, to benchmark their own results against the results of other VET providers and helps stakeholders obtain information concerning the performance of VET providers.

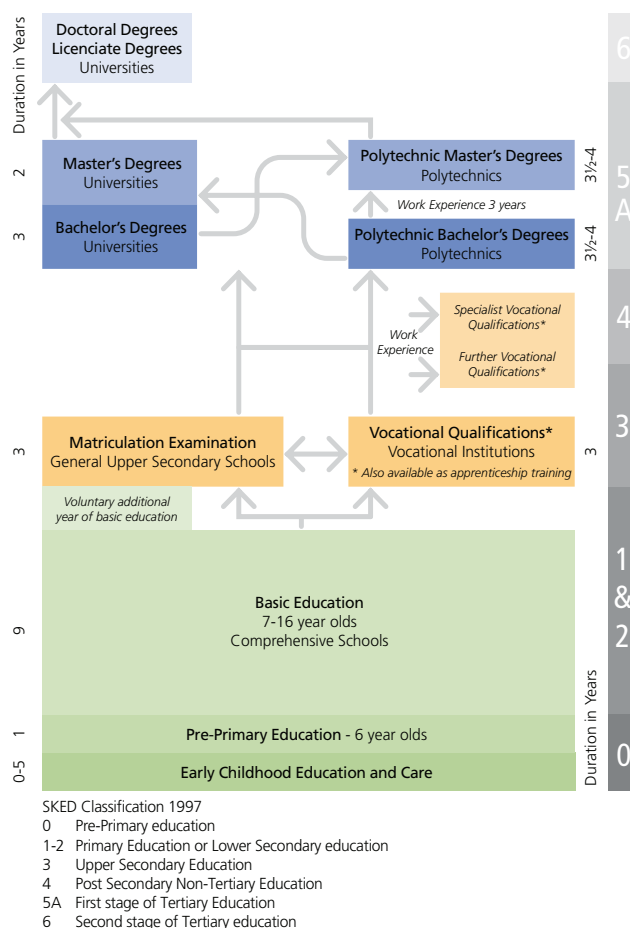
EQAVET and the Finnish system

The Finnish QM for VET complies with the EQAVET Recommendation at all levels. The supporting instruments like the VET Quality Strategy and the QM Recommendation for VET show that EQAVET has played an important role in the development of the instruments. The quality circle approach is a feature of the Finnish QM system for VET. The descriptors and indicators of EQAVET are used at the system level and some are also used at VET provider level.

The establishment of the quality assurance national reference point (NRP) at a very early stage was an important part of developing an EQAVET-based national approach to quality assurance in VET. The strategic decision integrating European activities with the national initiatives in QA also contributes to effectiveness and efficiency in a small country like Finland. A holistic approach to QA in all VET and work-based learning seems to be working successfully in Finland.

The VET Quality Strategy is not a QM system and does not seek to offer specific criteria, standards or indicators as such. More detailed criteria will be developed for the QM systems as part of the 2015 evaluation. The EQAVET recommendation has played a central role in developing the strategy for VET. For example, special funding is available to establish regional quality networks through which the further development of QM in VET will be supported.

EQAVET and the Finnish system



UEAPME, the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, a member of the EQAVET network, shares its view on the evaluation of the EQAVET Recommendation – an article by Nele Muys and Helen Hoffmann

“The employees and employers of tomorrow are now at school, be it in general education, vocational training or even undertaking an apprenticeship. If a future employer has a positive experience with a high-quality training, he or she will be more likely to promote and invest in work-based learning and/or apprenticeships.”

(Quote by Nele Muys, UEAPME representative, EQAVET working groups).

UEAPME considers the evaluation of EQAVET implementation is coming at an opportune moment. Since the adoption of the Recommendation in 2009, its objectives have remained highly relevant, and the topic of quality assurance in vocational education and training has steadily risen in significance across Europe, in line with the key challenges of high youth unemployment and the need to improve the quality and labour market relevance of VET systems in many Member States.

The implementation of EQAVET has resulted in some

key achievements, such as supporting changes in quality assurance systems in many Member States, directly and indirectly, and the commitment of Member States to set up National Reference Points. Moreover, the Bruges Communiqué has set as an objective the development by 2015 of a quality assurance framework for VET providers aligned to EQAVET.

However, the evaluation has also shed light on areas like governance where progress is needed. It has also recognised that “EQAVET would benefit from greater involvement of representatives of stakeholders and representatives of organisations which have an interest in strengthening the transparency of national quality assurance measures”.

According to UEAPME it is of the utmost importance to strengthen cooperation in the implementation of EQAVET as a toolbox, in order to improve quality assurance, transparency and mutual trust in VET, according to the needs of Member States. All stakeholders, including labour market actors and social partners, need to be

involved in the quality assurance process for better ownership and mutual trust, taking into account, also, the needs of small businesses.

Given the skills mismatch and ineffectiveness of VET systems in a number of Member States, a focus on learning outcomes and the “employability” indicators remains essential. The EQAVET Survey has demonstrated that indicators nos. 5 and 6, namely placement in VET programmes and utilisation of acquired skills in the workplace, are among those indicators less frequently used. For UEAPME these indicators are particularly useful

and relevant, as the quality assurance process should revolve around the competences needed on the labour market, with high-quality and work-based learning schemes being used as effective instruments to improve the transition from school to work.

UEAPME considers that EQAVET implementation overall is on the right track and that much has been achieved. By focusing more on the aforementioned topics in the stocktaking of EQAVET and its future, we hope that there will be more involvement by employer organisations to ensure a broader culture of quality assurance in VET.

Update on the EQAVET working groups by their chairs and experts

We asked the chairs (Dana Stroie and Katalin Molnar-Stadler) and the experts (Keith Brumffit and Maria Emilia Galvao), who are supporting the work the EQAVET working groups 2013-2014, to provide an update on the work to be developed by the EQAVET working groups on:

- facilitating the development of a QA approach for VET providers in line with EQAVET – Working group 1 (WG1)

- supporting VET systems to address the interrelation between the EQAVET Framework and existing quality management systems/instruments in order to guarantee quality, increased transparency, mobility and mutual trust – Working group 2 (WG2)

Working Group on facilitating the development of a QA approach for VET providers in line with EQAVET – (WG1):



Chair -Dana Stroie & expert -Keith Brumffit

Q How is the work of the working group on ‘facilitating the development of a QA approach for VET providers in line with EQAVET’ contributing to the devising of national approaches to make best use of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET at both levels, system and provider?

A (Dana Stroie): The WG’s main objective is to develop support for the Quality Assurance National Reference Points (NRPs), by preparing guidance that can be applied in different forms of workplace learning. The guidance will have a specific focus on challenges for WBL and success factors for overcoming them, contributing to knowledge transfer and policy

learning in the field.

Given the diversity of experiences and models for WBL developed in different EU Member States, the potential for mutual learning is clearly high. In most countries with attractive VET, work-based learning is a key component. For countries where development of WBL is limited, the provision of good practice examples is extremely useful ; in many cases, despite a clear political commitment, it remains a challenge to set up adequate and feasible action plans, at both system and provider level, and therefore WG’s guidance in the field is extremely supportive.

A (Keith Brumffit): The working group’s focus is on developing support for work-based learning – an area that is critical to supporting young people. High levels of confidence in work-based learning should be based on well-managed and well-understood quality assurance processes. The working group is reviewing examples from VET providers across Europe in order to identify the characteristics of an effective system and approach. From these examples, based on the quality assurance cycle in the EQAVET Recommendation, the group has distilled six building blocks which underpin a European approach to quality assuring work-based learning.

Q In more general terms how can the work of the WGs be seen to deepen the culture of quality assurance of VET and thereby enhance its overall quality and support the development of responses to major challenges like youth unemployment, skills mismatch etc.?

A (Dana) In the current socio-economic context, with high unemployment rates especially among young people, the development and implementation of well functioning VET systems is crucial. High quality VET, with a consistent and relevant component of work-based learning, facilitates young people's transition to work and improves the correlation of their skills with labour market needs.

EQAVET WGs provide an excellent platform where the representatives of Member States can learn from each other, allowing for a holistic view and a broad perspective beyond national boundaries, and contributing to knowledge transfer on specific aspects of quality assurance in VET. This will lead to an overall improvement in the quality of VET and support a strategic approach to excellence, which is a key element for each successful VET strategy.

A (Keith): The European Commission's recent publication (June 2013) on Work-Based Learning in Europe: Practices and Policy Pointers - http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/work-based-learning-in-europe_en.pdf – highlights the need to include work-based learning in all forms of initial VET. It also stresses that creating opportunities for high-quality work-based learning lies at the heart of current European education and training policies. We know that high quality is much more likely to occur where there are effective quality assurance processes in place. The working group's approach recognises that quality assurance can be complicated to organise and manage. By focusing on real examples of work-based quality assurance, the group intends to show that all employers and VET schools can use a set of simple building blocks to get started or to improve their quality assurance processes in line with their national, regional or sectoral systems.

Q How can this work be seen in relation to supporting the work of National Reference Points?

A (Dana): Through identification of key messages and by addressing the critical factors for a successful implementation of different aspects of quality assurance at both system and provider level, the results of the WGs are extremely valuable for the work of the quality assurance national reference points (NRPs). Furthermore, the great number of examples of good practice, tackling a wide range of situations and contexts, are a source of inspiration for NRPs in their efforts to take concrete initiatives to promote further development of the framework in the national context.

Developing user-friendly and widely accessible IT materials together with providing suggestions on how best to use the tool in national contexts are other important aspects of ensuring an efficient dissemination on a larger scale.

A (Keith): The working group's analysis is designed to support national reference points (NRPs). It recognises that examples are needed for each of the three main types of work-based learning:

- **apprenticeship schemes**, which combine

training in companies and VET schools or other education/training institutions;

- **on-the-job training** in companies, which typically cover internships, work placements or traineeships, and which are a compulsory or optional element of VET programmes leading to formal qualifications;
- **integration into a school-based programme** through on-site laboratories, workshops, kitchens, restaurants, junior or practice firms, simulations or real business/industry projects and assignments.

In addition, the work-based learning examples which support the NRPs will highlight the alignment between the European instruments (EQAVET, EQF, ECTS and ECVET). This is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the work of the NRPs and reflects a tendency to look for synergy and simplification whenever possible.

Q In your view what are the main challenges involved in taking this material, which has been developed in the working group, to a broader audience of policymakers and other relevant stakeholders?

A (Dana): All relevant documents, practices and tools developed should be brought closer to the relevant stakeholders by classical and IT means: documents disseminated at national level via website and printed materials, conferences and workshops. All key messages should be translated in order to facilitate their use by policymakers. It is always extremely useful to translate all the important documents, so that we can target a broader audience.

One of the biggest challenges is to ensure the adequate representation of participating countries. Participants that are proactive during the events and find ways to promote and disseminate the information significantly enhance the value of EQAVET activities, leading to a greater impact at the national, regional and local levels

A (Keith): The financial and economic crisis still affects many parts of Europe. It continues to limit employment and training opportunities – and its impact on young people is huge. In this context employers do not always have the means to offer training placements or work with VET schools. But when the upturn happens, employers will need well-trained and competent staff. The challenge involves thinking ahead – planning for the future in order that systems can respond quickly and confidently to a change in the financial and economic environment. Ensuring employers will be able to rely on recruiting staff with the right skills and qualifications means that we have to invest in quality assurance now. If we allow quality to drift, particularly in relation to work-based learning, we will undermine the future ability of employers to be competitive and succeed. Producing materials and support which helps NRPs to make this argument in a national context is a core part of the work.

Working Group 2 on supporting VET systems to address the interrelation between the EQAVET Framework and existing quality management systems/instruments in order to guarantee quality, increased transparency, mobility and mutual trust – (WG2)



Q How is the work of the working group on 'supporting VET systems to address the interrelation between the EQAVET Framework and existing quality management systems/instruments' contributing to the devising of national approaches making best use of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET at both levels, system and provider?

A (Katalin Molnar-Stadler): The successful implementation of the EQAVET Framework depends on how it can be used together with the already existing quality management approaches. Therefore it is important to identify the main commonalities and differences between them, from both broad and narrow perspectives.

Countries, who already have a QA system in place in VET and have at the same time committed themselves to implementing the EQAVET Framework, should consider the issue of aligning their system with EQAVET in their national approach (methodology, process/procedures/steps, actors involved etc.). In this respect the work and the products of the EQAVET WG2 can be helpful to countries because this exercise will show that the EQAVET Framework

1. identifies a small number of common core criteria, agreed at a European level, for the promotion of quality assurance and quality improvement in VET. As these common core quality criteria / descriptors embedded in the EQAVET Framework raise issues / questions that are considered crucial for quality assurance and quality enhancement of VET, they are to be found among the set of criteria of almost any quality management system or self-assessment model where they can lay down a common basis for comparison and thereby play an integrating role (meta-framework).
2. can coexist with other QM approaches as the European common core criteria in the framework are consistent with the set of requirements /

criteria of the two most commonly used existing instruments – the EFQM Excellence Model and the ISO 9001 standard – and covers their major aspects.

3. is NOT a completely new approach! It is based on existing approaches and utilises their best practices, structures and approaches. Therefore the member states can continue with and build on their existing QM practices when implementing the EQAVET Framework! I consider this to be one of the key success factors for EQAVET implementation at a national level.

Additionally, the alignment exercise (the display and comparison of linkages between the content elements of the EQAVET Framework (indicative descriptors and indicators) and other approaches) also provides for an overview of the content of different QM approaches.

Building the quality descriptors of the EQAVET Framework into the generic QM systems (like ISO 9001) can help make these systems more VET specific.

A (Maria Emilia Galvao): There are many issues that in combination may drive countries to implement the *EQAVET Recommendation*. It is not possible to separate them out but a single key factor can be identified: VET quality improvement plays a role in most countries, even with different weights. Drivers for the implementation of EQAVET include the EU policies in the area of E&T, namely the strategy for VET as a core element of the Union's growth agenda ⁶, assessment of the cost of inaction in modernising the VET systems or the recognition of the opportunities presented by the financial and economic crisis and examples of QA & QI policies/practices in other European countries. Similarly important are facilitating factors such as political will, good coordination between key stakeholders and identification of compatibility between existing QA & QI approaches and EQAVET.

It is within this context that the EQAVET WG2 was established with the mandate to focus on "Supporting VET systems to address the interrelation between the EQAVET Framework and existing quality management systems/instruments in order to guarantee quality, increased transparency, mobility and mutual trust". Hence, the work that will be developed by the working group until February 2014 aims to deliver guidance material, among other things, to support the devising of the national approaches, making best use of the EQAVET Framework. This guidance material includes a) a set of tables that compare and correlate the EQAVET

⁶ EU Commission (2012). Commission staff working document – Vocational education and training for better skills.growth and jobs. SWD (2012) 375 Final http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/sw375_en.pdf

Framework, the EFQM Excellence Model and the ISO 9001 Standard and b) guidance material organised in modules on how to align the existing QA & QI approaches in MS with EQAVET.

Implementing the EQAVET Framework is not a simple process, for three main reasons:

- It should not be an event but a mission-oriented process involving multiple decisions, actions, and actors;
- It is “a continuum located between central guidance and local autonomy”⁷ (Püzl & Treib, 2007) where the “central level” is the European Union (European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission) and the “local” level is the national level (Member State and subnational level);
- It implies the “Europeanisation” of national quality assurance approaches, i.e. in “downloading” the EQAVET Framework to the national context, the degree to which it “fits” or “misfits” the existing approach (es) will determine how and to what degree Member States will align their QA & QI approaches with EQAVET.

The aligning of existing QA & QI approaches with EQAVET and the defining of their interrelation and interaction can influence the values and practices embedded within VET systems or VET organizations, so the choice requires an explicit focus on what is needed in the specific context.

The guidance material attempts to address these issues, namely by developing a modular approach for the alignment of national QA approach(es) with the EQAVET Framework. The alignment will require consideration of the following:

- how EQAVET fits within overall QA policy, regulatory and programme environment at Member State level;
- whether it recognises and respects the same fundamental principles;
- whether the EQAVET Framework will be a good fit or an appropriate stretch for their national VET quality assurance and improvement approach;
- what strengths/opportunities as well as weaknesses/difficulties national stakeholders are likely to face in preparing the alignment exercise;
- whether national stakeholders are ready for the alignment of their QA & QI approaches with the EQAVET Framework;
- how national stakeholders can align their current QA & QI approach with the EQAVET Framework.

While the guidance material is designed to cover the full alignment process from deciding to make

changes to monitoring sustainability, some modules and or sections in the modules may be more relevant than others, depending on where Member States are in their alignment process, i.e. whether a) they have begun their alignment process yet; b) they are currently developing the process; c) they have already finalised it. In other words, the guidelines can be used as a reference document with modules consulted selectively as needed. However, because changes may be complex, some member states may take longer as early accomplishments uncover the need and opportunity for further improvement. In any event, it will be important to balance the need to proceed thoughtfully with the need to move quickly enough to show progress and maintain momentum.

Q In more general terms how can the work of the WGs be seen to deepen the culture of quality assurance of VET and thereby enhance its overall quality, and support the development of responses to major challenges like youth unemployment, skills mismatch etc.?

- A**
- (Katalin): Emphasising and pursuing the importance of the consistent and systematic use of the Quality Cycle.
 - Focussing on implementing improvement actions to promote and sustain continuous quality improvement.
 - Involvement of stakeholders (e.g. the representatives of the European social partner organisations take part in the work of both WGs).
 - The WGs provide an opportunity for sharing and exchanging models, methods, tools, good practice and mutual learning, which is one of the guiding principles of European cooperation on QA in VET (Copenhagen Process).
 - Promoting and contributing to achieving (and sustaining) excellence in VET at all levels.

A (Maria Emilia): Promoting a quality improvement culture in VET at all levels (EU and Member State level; system, providers, teachers/trainers and learners level) is the main goal of the EQAVET Recommendation. It is based on the assumption that a quality culture is the pre-condition to enhancing the overall quality of VET and thus supporting the development of responses to the major challenges faced by EU countries in a globalised economy and society. Even if, sometimes, a simplistic view of employability seems to prevail, i.e. VET learners are somehow given “employability” as a result of their having been a VET learner, which leads them to being employed, a more realistic view tends to recognise the role of relevant external factors, e.g. the economic situation of countries/ regions. In any event, it is generally agreed that VET quality improvement constitutes a key impact factor on employability by enhancing the skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities of VET learners and, ultimately, their competence as lifelong learners.

The EQAVET WGs are a key part of the larger EQAVET community of practice. They are comprised

⁷ Fischer, Frank, Miller, Gerald, M., and Sidney, Mara, S., (eds), (2007), Handbook of public policy analysis: theory, politics, and methods. CRC Press/Taylor & Francis Group, USA.

of representatives of Member States and social partners for whom VET is a common area of interest and concern. By working together they have built a trusted relationship with each other regarding a) VET quality assurance and improvement, in general and b) the implementation of the EQAVET Framework, in particular. They share their unique knowledge and experience related to the issues identified by the EQAVET Annual Forum (2013)⁸, and, by doing so, they develop a shared understanding and approach to the issues and come to build a collective knowledge base. The expected end result is twofold: a) the experience of the WGs will afford each member a collective knowledge-base that, when applied, will improve their individual professional and institutional performance, which, in turn, can have a dramatic impact on improving the issues they were drawn together to address and b) a set of tangible deliverables by February 2014.

Capacity building is an integral dimension of the EQAVET Network's efforts to support Member States in implementing the EQAVET Framework. It is in the light of this corollary that the WGs' planned set of deliverables needs to be seen. These materials attempt to support member states' VET systems in enhancing the potential "absorptive capacity"⁹ of their VET systems and provision by a) recognising the value of new information that is likely to be generated by the implementation of the EQAVET Framework and the use of the WGs' deliverables by the EQAVET national reference points (NRPs) and the larger VET community, b) choosing what to adopt and apply in order to address challenges like the emerging needs of future growth sectors, including skills mismatch and shortages, and its impact on (un)employment.

Q How can this work be seen in relation to supporting the work of National Reference Points?

A (Katalin): NRPs definitely need guidance in their work at both the system level and with VET providers on the issues related to QA of VET. The materials – tools developed by the EQAVET WGs – can provide a good basis / offer assistance in this but these tools should be translated, adjusted to their national context and further developed to fulfil their needs. The examples of good practice elaborated by WG members can also be regarded as a helpful stimulus in their work.

(Maria Emilia): The materials under development by the EQAVET WGs may be considered a key element for the implementation strategies and plans of NRPs. However, because implementation strategies and plans are / will differ from country to country, the materials are likely to be used by NRPs in different ways too, given that Member States may be at

⁸ Topic of Working group 1: Facilitating the development of a quality assurance approach for VET providers in line with EQAVET.
Topic of Working group 2: Supporting VET systems to address the interaction between the EQAVET Framework and quality management systems/instruments.

⁹ Cohen, W. M., and Levinthal, D. A., (1990). Absorptive capacity: a new perspective on learning and innovation. In *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol 35, No 1, Special Issues: Technology, organizations, and innovation <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2393553?uid=3738880&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21102773612437>

different stages of EQAVET implementation, i.e.

- countries where a QA approach exists and the EQAVET implementation is completed, i.e. the national QA approach is aligned with EQAVET;
- countries where a QA approach exists and preparation for the alignment of the national QA approach with EQAVET is underway;
- countries where a QA approach exists but nothing has been done as regards the implementation of EQAVET, namely the alignment of the existing approach with EQAVET;
- countries where no national QA approach exists.

An illustration of this is the use of the guidance on the alignment of existing national QA/QI approaches with the EQAVET Framework. These materials are being designed to facilitate their use by NRPs in any way that suits their specific context and thus they are intended as supporting material and not as a substitute for professional judgement. Accordingly, NRPs may wish

- To use the whole or part of the Guide as part of an approach at national/regional or local level;
- To use it as a roadmap for navigating the alignment process at national, regional or local level;
- To share it with the relevant stakeholders by reflecting on it and using the ideas to develop their own alignment exercise at national/regional/local level;
- To use it as a vehicle for VET providers' professional development, particularly for aligning their QA approach to EQAVET.

Q In your view what are the main challenges in taking this material, which has been developed in the working group, to a broader audience of policymakers and other relevant stakeholders?

- A
- (Katalin): To emphasise and communicate the benefits of QA / use of EQAVET Framework in VET.
 - To state / define clearly the role of the material in question: why was it developed (the rationale behind it) and what is it intended for (when to be used, by whom and for what purpose).
 - Maybe an executive summary of the materials, especially for policymakers and social partners would be useful. Otherwise, the materials might appear too detailed and technical.
 - Language issue: Try to use simple language, avoid being too technical.
 - Mentoring and expert support might be needed for VET providers to help them to use the materials in the correct way.
 - Information and training for the potential users of the materials.

A (Maria Emilia): In the light of the literature on dissemination as a communication process, there are four major challenges to be considered regarding the way in which the deliverables developed by WG2 will be used. They are as follows:

- Dissemination source (the organisation or individual responsible for conducting dissemination activities): the EQAVET Secretariat at European level and the NRPs at national level.
 - Challenge: the organisational capacity¹⁰ of NRPs to plan, implement and evaluate a dissemination plan involving the key stakeholders.
- The content that is disseminated (the product itself, as well as any supporting information or materials): a) *Mapping of the EFQM Excellence Model and the ISO 9001 Standard to the EQAVET Framework* and b) *the Guide to aligning national Quality Assurance Approaches with EQAVET*.
 - Challenge: utilisation is envisaged as the move from awareness through understanding to commitment. The critical element of utilisation is that these materials must be digested, and individuals and organisations need to reconcile them with their previous understanding and experience in order “to own” them. Firstly, however, the materials need to be “adopted” before they can be “adapted” to the national/ regional or local context.
- The dissemination medium (the ways in which the product is described, “wrapped” and transmitted): a multiple media format, including workshops, on-line dissemination, “mouth-to-mouth” communication, etc.

10 According to Durlak and DuPre organizational capacity is “... the necessary motivation and ability to identify, select, plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain effective interventions.” In Durlak, Joseph, A. and DuPre, Emily, P. (2008). Implementation matters: a review of research on the influence of implementation on program outcomes and the factors influencing implementation. In American Journal of Community Psychology. <http://www.springer.com/psychology/community+psychology/journal/10464?hideChart=1#realtime>

- Challenge: the media by which the materials are distributed to users can enhance or detract from their utilisation. There are, for example, equity issues concerning the use of digital technology.

- The user or intended user (of the information or product to be disseminated): NRPs and VET providers as well as other relevant stakeholders at national level.
 - Challenges: the fact that involvement of representatives of MS to ensure that the materials address the needs of users/ intended users can only take place at the development phase (at European level) gives rise to an important issue in the dissemination phase, and ultimately in the utilisation of the materials i.e. the readiness of users to accept change (some research suggesting that external mandates for change are important but personal motivation is more powerful). Moreover, the diversity of cultures and languages, cultural differences related to context, decision-making styles or beliefs about change and responses to change constitute important factors to be taken into account when we propose the utilisation of materials that are not country specific but, rather, generic in nature.

Two characteristics that are consistently related to implementation are adaptability (flexibility) and compatibility (contextual appropriateness, fit, match, congruence)¹¹. The materials currently being created by WG2 are an attempt to help potential users address these issues when they embark upon the process of implementing the EQAVET Framework and mapping it to their QA & QI approaches. The material may be helpful in orientating the debate between the different levels of the VET governance system, from the policy decision-making level through the operationalisation level to practitioner level.

11 Durlak, Joseph, A. and DuPre, Emily, P. (2008). Implementation matters: a review of research on the influence of implementation on program outcomes and the factors influencing implementation. In American Journal of Community Psychology. <http://www.springer.com/psychology/community+psychology/journal/10464?hideChart=1#realtime>

Assuring quality in CVET: current and future role of EQAVET –

an article by Mantas Sekmokas, policy officer in vocational training and adult education; Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig unit of the DG EAC

“It is quality rather than quantity that matters.”

Lucius Annaeus Seneca.

The European quality assurance reference framework for vocational education and training (EQAVET) was established to provide European policymakers with a European reference to help promote and monitor continuous improvement in VET systems¹². A variety of economic and social trends, both short term and long term, strengthens the case that quality assurance is becoming more relevant and useful as a governance tool. Continuing fiscal consolidation, deregulation and decentralisation of education systems, together with new evidence based on the variability of skills and learning outcomes between the EU Member States¹³, all point to the need for further development of VET system quality. But while the formal and the initial education and training has undergone substantial developments to ensure better quality, continuous education and training in most cases remains characterised by fragmentation and diversity of policies and provision. It is thus still underpinned by a lack of transparency for both participants and policymakers alike.

In the light of this situation, European Commission has carried out a study on quality assurance in c-VET and future development of EQAVET¹⁴. In that study EQAVET is being compared with other existing c-VET quality assurance instruments, covering both public as well as private quality assurance measures and providing in-depth case analysis of a number of identified international (ISO 9001, EFQM) and national (AZAV from Germany, Ö-CERT from Austria, Investors in people from UK and ‘Lycée des métiers’ from France) instruments. The study also formulates a number of scenarios for future development of EQAVET – for example, how to broaden its use by policymakers at system level, or its relevance

to training providers. Finally, the study also suggests potential directions in which EQAVET framework could be developed in the future.

For the comparison of EQAVET with other quality assurance instruments the study adopts a methodology linked to the nature of EQAVET, which supports both system and provider level quality assurance. EQAVET is compared, first, to existing system level quality assurance arrangements and, second, to provider level quality assurance instruments. Each of the two approaches produces distinct conclusions and insights into different aspects of assuring quality in c-VET.

A key insight from the study, in terms of comparability of EQAVET with system-level quality assurance arrangements, is that EQAVET and current system level quality assurance arrangements are not fully aligned in their scope. Whereas EQAVET tries to describe criteria for the overall c-VET policymaking process, national quality assurance targets quality of training directly – provider quality requirements, coherence of qualification systems and relevance of training. The system level approach of EQAVET could, thus, be better linked to areas such as, for example, promotion of evidence-based policy, governance quality or regulatory impact assessment. The study also makes the case that the “managerial” nature of EQAVET, engrained in quality cycle, is different from policy decision-making processes. Thus EQAVET is not sufficiently comparable to national system level quality assurance approaches, but is more comparable to policy decision-making/governance arrangements. These issues, however, were not the focus of the study.

Another group of relevant findings addresses the issue of provider level quality assurance instruments. Firstly, most reviewed provider level quality assurance instruments are based on external review (certification, accreditation, inspection, registration, benchmarking/peer-review, award or label). Secondly, all measures could be divided into two broad groups: those which focus on internal quality management processes and those which focus on the assessment of quality/performance level. EQAVET is quite similar to instruments targeting internal quality management, unlike those instruments that are meant to

¹² Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (2009/C 155/01), 2009.

¹³ The survey of Adult skills (PIAAC): Implications for education and training policies in Europe, European Commission, 2013, ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/piaac_en.pdf

¹⁴ Study on quality assurance in continuous VET and on future development of EQAVET, European Commission, 2013

establish and measure the level of performance. Still, the study identified several areas not covered by EQAVET as compared to other provider level QA instruments. These include: adequacy of equipment/infrastructure; focus on learners – management of learner feedback and learning pathways; provision of information and guidance.

Finally, the study provides country reviews and case analysis of a selected number of quality assurance instruments. For example, the analysis of Ö-CERT confirms that national meta-frameworks, building upon existing instruments, can be valuable, cost-effective and provide added value. Ö-CERT also provides a framework of comparability without a complete homogenisation of quality assurance initiatives. In another case, AZAV quality assurance arrangement proves that a QA arrangement can be used to provide for an outcome oriented measure of quality. This can be an important tool to improve the governance and accountability of publicly-funded training provision (in this case, training for the unemployed). When comparing EQAVET and international quality assurance instruments, some interesting differences emerge, for example higher transparency among developing quality standards and external evaluation in ISO/EFQM; benchmarking practices within the EFQM and other relevant good practices.

Overall, the study provides interesting insights into the dissimilarities and similarities of EQAVET to various system and provider level quality assurance arrangements and instruments. But a second look at the study also reveals some pertinent tensions faced by policymakers and providers in assuring quality. For example, it becomes clear that policymakers must often choose between narrow (financing or qualifications) and broad (market transparency or governance) system level quality assurance arrangements. Similarly, it seems that quality of training, rather than quality of policy measures, tends to be the focus. When making such choices an important aspect is the different costs and benefits of specific arrangements/instruments – but in most cases there is little research on either, as was recognised by the Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning¹⁵. The final question is how EQAVET could help to address those issues and how it should evolve to do so with greatest effect. The study provides relevant evidence to inform this debate.



Mantas Sekmokas, interim policy officer, Vocational training and adult education; Leonardo da Vinci, DG Education and Culture, European Commission

¹⁵ Thematic Working Group on Quality in Adult Learning. Final Report. Open method of coordination (OMC) thematic working group of EU Member States Experts. (forthcoming).

Focus on: Implementing the WP in 2013

EQAVET Sectoral Seminar on the ICT sector (Berlin, October 2013)

An EQAVET Sectoral Seminar on the ICT sector (Berlin, 14-15 October) was hosted in Berlin by BITKOM (Federal Association for Information Technology, Telecommunications and New Media) in collaboration with DEQA-VET (German Reference Point for Quality Assurance in VET).

This Sectoral Seminar focused on the quality assurance of VET in the ICT sector, with the objective of providing an opportunity for key stakeholders to analyse topics considered crucial and to share their opinions and concerns, inspiring each other in the process and ensuring follow-up which, it is hoped, will foster further policy developments in quality assurance-related issues within their own VET systems for the ICT sector.



Participants at the seminar

This provided the context for formulating guidelines and/or principles to support the quality assurance of initial and continuing VET within the ICT sector, as outlined in the policy brief on the seminar.

Participants were encouraged to reflect on how quality assurance of VET is addressed and managed in their country. In addition, participants considered how the implementation of the EQAVET Framework in relation to the ICT sector could be most appropriately supported.

The EQAVET Sectoral Seminars have highlighted the importance of involving the social partners in quality assurance procedures for the provision of VET in line with the EQAVET Framework.

All related material (background paper, programme, presentations, policy brief and photos) is available on the EQAVET website at:

<http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/sectoral-seminars/sectoral-seminar-ICT.aspx>

Joint expert seminar in quality assurance in VET and HE for improving their permeability (Brussels, October 2013).

An joint expert seminar on quality assurance approaches in

VET and HE focusing on the concept of permeability, was organised in collaboration with CEDEFOP (Brussels 22-23 October). This seminar brought together relevant actors from member states and organisations from the VET and the HE sectors.

Sixty experts from member states on Quality in VET and/or HE reflected together supported by encouraging views from the relevant stakeholders in both sub-sectors (e.g. EESC, ENQA, EURASHE, OECD, students' representatives, VET providers, etc).

The key message emerging from the seminar was that further collaboration is needed for building confidence and effective QA systems that would facilitate learning throughout life. They made proposals for joint activities with full respect for each education sub-sector's agenda and priorities.



Participants at the seminar



Sophie Weisswange, EC and chair of EQAVET network and Mr. Jean Buffenoir from EVTA European Vocational Training Association dialoguing in a coffee break at the seminar

Material used at this seminar is available on the EQAVET website at http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/vet_higher_education_seminar.aspx and CEDEFOP' at: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/events/21340.aspx>.

The report of the meeting will be published in Jan. 2014.

Peer learning activity on EQAVET Indicator 6 (Belfast, December 2013).

A peer learning activity (PLA) took in Belfast on December 3-4, 2013 on the ongoing work of using and implementing EQAVET Indicator number 6 'Utilisation of acquired skills in the workplace'. More information about the PLA is available on EQAVET website at <http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/peer-learning-activities/pla-Belfast-2013.aspx>

The PLA was organised by the Department for Employment and Learning, UK, Northern Ireland (Directorate for Further Education Policy) in partnership with the EQAVET Secretariat.

Participants had the opportunity to openly discuss the policy and organisational issues related to the topic of the activity. The discussion was supported by examples from three Member States (Northern Ireland, Estonia and

Greece), which illustrated how this indicator has been implemented, particularly:

- A. what data on skills utilisation they are currently collecting and using, as part of an established quality assurance system
- B. how data on skills utilisation can be collected and used, and
- C. what barriers VET systems and providers are facing in implementing this indicator.

The discussions provided a deeper insight into the policy and organisational dimensions of implementing this indicator, including its relevance to quality assurance purposes. It also provided an opportunity for sharing lessons learned when implementing this indicator; and identifying challenges faced by VET systems and providers for the initial and continuing sectors.

What's new?

Arab ministers agree to boost education quality Ministers and parliamentarians from eight Arab countries agreed to give the highest priority to vocational training, when they met at the ETF's Policy Leaders' Forum in Marseille, France, on 6 October 2013.

Present at the Forum were senior officials from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. All countries in the region face similar challenges: a growing youth population, an urgent need for jobs and a vocational school system with a poor image. The ETF Policy Leaders' Forum provided a unique opportunity for the ministers of education and labour to share experience and discuss possible solutions with Pervence Berès, Chair of the European Parliament's Employment Committee, and Androulla Vassiliou, EU Commissioner for Education and Culture.

'Commissioner Vassiliou noted that: 'Only through structured partnerships between training institutions, with businesses and social partners, and of course with policy support, will it be possible to develop the quality of vocational education'.

For more information on the event visit ETF website at http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Arab_ministers_agree_to_boost_education_quality_EN

Also download the related document prepared by Elizabeth Watters on *Higher quality VET – better chances for young people – Challenges and policy responses in the Arab Mediterranean countries* at: [http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/0/02C86636F5ABD9D3C1257BFD003130B3/\\$file/HIGHER%20QUALITY%20VET.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/0/02C86636F5ABD9D3C1257BFD003130B3/$file/HIGHER%20QUALITY%20VET.pdf)

"European Alliance for Apprenticeships" – UEAPME paper on the Contribution of crafts and SMEs to apprenticeships, has been published

UEAPME published its position paper on the "The Contribution of Crafts and SMEs to apprenticeships" for the "European Alliance for Apprenticeships". UEAPME is one of the signatory parties. UEAPME's paper contains 8 recommendations for more and better apprenticeships in Crafts and SMEs, which is based on practical examples of UEAPME members in seven European countries (AT, CH, DE, FR, IT, PL, TR). Download the paper at: http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/UEAPME_paper_contribution_of_Crafts_and_SMEs_to_apprenticeships.pdf

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships brings together public authorities, business and social partners, VET providers, youth representatives and other key actors such as chambers in order to coordinate and upscale

different initiatives for successful apprenticeship type schemes. There are three strands of action: 1. reform of apprenticeship systems; 2. benefits of apprenticeships; 3. funding and resources. Apprenticeships and work-based learning appear to ease the transition from education and training to work. Boosting the quality and supply of apprenticeships is therefore one of the EU policy initiatives to address the unprecedented levels of youth unemployment. The initiative was launched by the European Commission in July 2013. More information at: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/apprenticeship/>



EQAVET

European Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training