

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

2008/0069(COD) - 18/06/2009 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a “European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training”.

PROPOSED ACT: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training.

CONTENT: following a first reading agreement with the European Parliament, the Council adopted a Recommendation on a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training. This recommendation establishes a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework as a reference instrument to help Member States to promote and monitor continuous improvement of their VET systems **based on common European references**, which builds on and further develops the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF). The framework could help Member States to further improve and develop their VET systems, support lifelong learning strategies, further European labour market integration and the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework ([EQF](#)) and promote a culture of quality improvement at all levels, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems.

This recommendation should contribute to modernising education and training systems, improving the effectiveness of training by seeking to ensure that people do not leave without qualifications, **improving the interrelationship of education, training and employment, building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning** and expanding the awarding of qualifications on the basis of experience acquired. This recommendation also provides for a framework for the identification, support and exchange of best practices **not only at national but also at local and regional levels in all relevant networks**, including the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network.

The European Parliament and the Council recommend that Member States:

- **Recommendation 1:** use and further develop the **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework**, quality criteria, indicative descriptors and reference indicators to further improve and develop their vocational education and training (VET) systems, support lifelong learning strategies and the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and of the European Quality Charter for Mobility;
- **Recommendation 2:** devise, not later than 18 June 2011, an approach aimed at **improving quality assurance systems** at national level and making best use of the framework, involving all relevant stakeholders;
- **Recommendation 3:** participate actively in the framework network as a basis for further development of **common principles, reference criteria and indicators, guidelines and tools** for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local levels;
- **Recommendation 4:** establish a **Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET** that is linked to the particular structures and requirements of each Member State and that brings together all stakeholders concerned, in order to ensure the follow-up of initiatives. The reference points should: (i) keep a wide range of stakeholders informed about the activities of the framework network; (ii) provide active support for the implementation of the work programme; (iii) take

concrete initiatives to promote further development of the framework; (iv) support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance; (v) ensure that information is disseminated to stakeholders effectively;

- **Recommendation 5:** undertake a **review of the implementation process** every four years on the basis of reference criteria.

Moreover, the Parliament and the Council endorse the Commission's intention to:

- **Intention 1:** support Member States in carrying out the above tasks, in particular by **facilitating cooperation and mutual learning**, testing and developing guidance material, and providing information on quality developments in VET across Member States;
- **Intention 2:** promote and participate together with the Member States in the framework network, contributing to **policy development** in this area through concrete proposals and initiatives;
- **Intention 3:** ensure follow-up to the implementation of this recommendation by presenting **a report every four years** on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review of this recommendation conducted in cooperation with the Member States and involving the various stakeholders; undertake, on the basis of that report and in cooperation with the Member States, an evaluation of the implementation of this recommendation and, if necessary, its revision.

Non-binding use: use of the Framework will be **voluntary**. Its main users will be public authorities and the bodies charged with quality assurance and improvement.

Annexes: the Framework comprises 2 Annexes: a quality assurance and improvement cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment and review of VET, supported by **common quality criteria** (annex 1 to the proposal), **indicative descriptors and indicators** (annex 2 to the proposal). The set of indicators will be further developed through European cooperation on a bilateral and/or multilateral basis, building on European data and national registers.

Lastly, it should be noted that this Recommendation is closely linked to the proposal on the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) (please see [COD/2008/0070](#)).

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