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Do citizens benefit from the new European tools in vocational education and training?

The common [European tools for education and training](#)¹, Europass, European and National Qualification Frameworks, Credit transfer systems and Quality Assurance, will make it easier for citizens to pursue learning throughout their lives, and to have their skills and knowledge recognised across Europe. The question now is how to release the full potential of these tools.



MEP Hannu Takkula (ALDE-FIN); Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and Acting Director Christian Lettmayr at the joint Cedefop-European Parliament workshop, 22/11/2011.

After a long development phase, the tools are now being implemented in many countries and becoming of use to citizens. In the past five years, **43 million EU citizens have used Europass**, while all EU countries are in the process of establishing national qualification frameworks which refer to **the European Qualifications Framework**. These make education and training systems easier to understand, and show learners how to make their way within national systems and between countries.

¹ Europass <http://bit.ly/sUPR9b>;

European Qualifications Framework <http://bit.ly/kRB8NM> and related National Qualifications Frameworks;

European Credit System in Vocational Education and Training <http://bit.ly/suiMBB>;

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework <http://bit.ly/vq9y5U>;

Validation of non-formal and informal learning <http://bit.ly/tORI0t>;

Lifelong Guidance <http://bit.ly/rBXXfe>

The European and national frameworks are supported by arrangements for the **recognition and validation** of non-formal learning and for **credit transfer**, further increasing the flexibility of education and training systems. Through validation, citizens will be able to get official recognition for skills they have acquired outside of the formal education and training systems.

Still, the full potential of the tools has yet to be released. They need to be strengthened further so that they can help make education and training systems more open and flexible, and support those looking for a job in another EU Member State.

On 22 November, Cedefop co-organised with the European Parliament (MEP Nadja Hirsch) a workshop to discuss these questions. At the workshop, Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Multilingualism, commented on the new role of education and training. **"What is at stake", she said, "is the ability and the readiness of educational systems to provide quality education and training that will reflect, on the one hand, the personal needs of young people and on the other, the growth and developmental needs of the society and the economy".**

The workshop **focused on the experiences of the stakeholders** in implementing the tools and principles. All agreed that the present pace of dissemination and implementation of the tools must be kept up and that stakeholder involvement and cooperation remains important.

Several Cedefop publications report on and analyse the progress achieved. They are all available on Cedefop's website.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/understanding-qualifications/index.aspx>

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About Cedefop

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), an agency of the European Union based in Thessaloniki, Greece, supports European policy-making in the field of vocational education and training. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu>