



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
13 NOVEMBER 2008**

## **European Qualifications Framework: Mutual trust is necessary for worker and learner mobility**

A Cedefop workshop, *Testing the European Qualifications Framework (EQF): Relating international, national and sectoral qualifications to the EQF*, held on 10-11 November in Thessaloniki, discussed the results of several projects that focus on identifying the challenges of implementing the European Qualifications Framework, the **first ever international frame of reference for qualifications**.

This workshop, part of Cedefop's extensive work on the development and implementation of the EQF, identified various ways in which **sectors, companies, public authorities and countries can use the EQF** to foster mobility and lifelong learning.

Professional qualifications are no longer issued only by national authorities, but also by large companies, chambers of commerce and industry or other sectoral bodies – not just in the Member States but increasingly at international level too.

But this proliferation of qualifications from various sources raises the risk of making their content less easy to understand and thus undermining trust in their value. Such a lack of transparency makes it hard for people to get their knowledge, skills and learning acknowledged when moving between companies, sectors or countries.

**The originality of the European Qualifications Framework** is that it moves away from an institutional approach to qualifications (i.e. based on which body issues the qualification) towards a definition based on the concept of "learning outcomes". This means that the comparison and combination of different certificates and diplomas should no longer be based on the question of "who issued your qualification" but on *what you know, understand and are able to do*.

This shift may sound innocuous but is actually quite radical: it entertains the possibility that **learning acquired outside the education and training system** (at work or during leisure time) **could be formally recognised as part of a qualification**. It also allows for the combination of traditionally incompatible certificates and diplomas awarded by national authorities, multinationals or sectoral bodies.

**The European Council and the European Parliament have invited Member States to link their national qualification levels to the EQF by 2010** - and this requires mutual trust. The workshop presented proposals that contribute to building this trust:

- by addressing the way in which countries link their national qualification systems to the EQF;

- by illustrating how the learning outcomes approach can be used in a concrete way;
- and finally, by stressing the critical role of quality assurance when certifying learning.

**At all these levels, Cedefop will be providing practical help to stakeholders:**

- through its prominent role in the EQF Advisory Group, which brings together most bodies awarding qualifications in Europe;
- by analysing the results of EQF pilot projects and testing;
- by undertaking studies and compiling synthesis reports on key issues related to EQF implementation.

**Workshop agenda:** <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/index.asp?section=3&sub=1&read=3820>

**About the EQF:** [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm)

###

### **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.

[www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)

###

*Project Manager:*

**Jens Bjornavold**, +32 2 2991093 E-mail: [qualification\\_team@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:qualification_team@cedefop.europa.eu)

*News Service:*

**Ioáanna Nezi**, tel. +30 2310 490186, E-mail: [ioanna.nezi@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:ioanna.nezi@cedefop.europa.eu)

*Head of Area, Communication, Information and Dissemination:*

**Gerd Oskar Bausewein**, tel. +30 2310 490288, E-mail: [gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:gerd-oskar.bausewein@cedefop.europa.eu)