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## New European tools for training quality and credit transfer reach practitioners

On 17 and 18 November Cedefop and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture will be holding a launching conference for two new European tools: the **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF)** and the **European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)** in Brussels, with the participation of over 300 representatives of training providers and other bodies and institutions from across Europe.

The aim of the conference is to bring together all stakeholders and explain what is at stake, show them what has been achieved so far, and inspire and invite them to help shape the process.

The recommendations of the European Parliament and of the Council on EQARF and ECVET, adopted on 18 June 2009, provide solutions to several issues related to coordination between EU Member States in vocational education and training (the 'Copenhagen process'): the **mobility** of learners in Europe, **quality** in vocational education and training (VET) provision and management, and helping learners create their own **pathways to qualification**.

All stakeholders need to contribute actively to the process in order to put these recommendations into practice. The conference will focus on examining the most efficient ways – both for learners and for the European economy – to get all interested parties involved, and to ensure that all related measures operate in tandem.

ECVET and EQARF are the latest tools to be adopted through the **open method of coordination**, the modus operandi of the Copenhagen Process, after the success of Europass and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF).

**ECVET** is intended to make it easier for individuals **to transfer and accumulate learning outcomes** from one qualification system to another, from one training system to another or from one learning pathway to another, inside a country or between countries. It will help make learning and qualification systems more open to each other (permeability) and increase compatibility between systems for general education and for vocational education and training. The four workshops dedicated to ECVET at the conference are meant to conclusively show the feasibility and desirability of ECVET, explore the ways in which ECVET is already being experienced, and discuss options for implementation.

**EQARF** is designed to help Member States promote and monitor better quality in vocational education and training – a sector which is characterised by a multiplicity of training providers and approaches. To this end, EQARF provides a 'reference platform',

including quality principles, reference criteria and indicators. It helps Member States make their VET systems more accountable and more transparent by focusing on results ('outputs and outcomes').

It also encourages the adoption of a systematic approach to planning, implementing, checking and modifying, in which self-assessment and indicators of measurable results play a critical role. Member States are invited to appoint a 'national reference point' in order to provide a link between the EU and national levels, and to participate in a designated European network for quality assurance.

Links:

1. Cedefop publication on quality assurance:

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information\\_resources/Bookshop/568/4089\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/568/4089_en.pdf)

2. Interview with Isabelle Le Mouillour, Project Manager, ECVET in Cedefop newsletter (June 2009):

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/etv/news/default.asp?idnews=4577>

3. Recommendations of the European Parliament and of the Council:

ECVET: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0011:0018:EN:PDF>

EQARF: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0001:0010:EN:PDF>

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