



# The European Qualifications Framework: supporting learning, work and cross border mobility

15-16 March 2018, Brussels

## Workshop 5

**What is the role of social partners and other stakeholders in the EQF process and what are their future expectations?**

The implementation and impact of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and associated National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) requires the involvement and ownership of a broad range of stakeholders. Qualification frameworks operating in isolation will not make a difference and will not generate trust.

According to the EQF Recommendation key stakeholders include learners, education and training providers, qualifications authorities, quality assurance bodies, employers, trade unions, chambers of industry, commerce and crafts, bodies involved in the recognition of academic and professional qualifications, employment services and services in charge of migrant integration. Member States should encourage the use of the EQF by social partners, public employment services, education providers, quality assurance bodies and public authorities to support the comparison of qualifications and transparency of the learning outcomes.

The EQF Advisory Group, which is the main governance tool of the EQF, is composed of representatives of the Member States, other participating countries, social partners and other stakeholders. The quality assurance principles for qualifications with an EQF level and the principles for credit systems related to NQFs referenced to the EQF, now part of the EQF Recommendation, also refer to the importance of involving and cooperating with stakeholders in order to enhance trust in the quality and level of qualification with an EQF level, and to support transitions and facilitate progression.

The EQF has triggered the development of comprehensive NQFs covering all levels and types of qualifications. In many countries this has led to the setting up of new types of coordination bodies involving a broad range of stakeholders, including social partners. These governing bodies, by addressing the entire qualification landscape, can potentially play an important role in reducing barriers to progression and mobility and promoting lifelong learning and to ensure frameworks are responsive to the social and economic needs of the society. They have also contributed to building trust between stakeholders, for example higher education and vocational education and training (VET) providers, that do not typically cooperate much with each other.

The learning outcomes approach promoted by the EQF introduces a common language allowing stakeholders in education and training and the labour market to better address the matching of skills, needs and provisions. For qualifications to be relevant, it is crucial to ensure a systematic review and renewal processes ('feedback loops'). For these to work effectively, labour market stakeholders play an important role.

The following questions will be addressed by the speakers and discussed by the participants in the working group sessions:

- 1) How have qualifications frameworks ensured active involvement and engagement of stakeholders in order to generate trust? What are the key elements to foster their involvement?
- 2) What is required for qualifications frameworks to make sure stakeholders can influence the overall coordination and governance of education and training?
- 3) What can be done to ensure that qualifications frameworks are responsive to the changing needs of the labour market?