



EQAVET

EQAVET Annual Network Meeting 2022

Full summary report

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Welcoming words.....	3
Update of the EU VET policy context and presentation on policy developments relevant for the context of quality assurance in VET	4
European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability.....	4
Skills for the green transition	6
A review of the first pilot peer reviews	7
EQAVET website and EQAVET Community Space: Feedback from the Network	9
EQAVET web pages.....	9
New EQAVET community space	10
Workshops.....	10
Topic 1: Graduate tracking	10
Topic 2: Involvement of the students in the process of quality assurance	12
EQAVET Community development sessions	13
OECD Project on improving Quality Assurance of Adult Education and Training	15
Highlights from the work of four EQAVET NRPs	15
Meeting close.....	17
Annex	18
EQAVET Work Programme 2 nd semester 2022 (last update: 21 June 2022)	18
Preview: EQAVET work programme 2023.....	18

Introduction

The EQAVET Annual Network Meeting (ANM) is an opportunity for the EQAVET community to meet up, share knowledge and experiences and discuss the strategic direction of their joint work responding to policy needs concerning quality assurance of VET in Europe.

This EQAVET Annual Network Meeting 2022 was organised by the European Commission and the EQAVET Secretariat in Paris, France. Representatives from 20 EU Member States plus representatives from Montenegro, Norway, Serbia Turkey. Apologies were received from Bulgaria, Cyprus Denmark, Ireland, Romania, Spain attended the meeting. The European Training Foundation (ETF) and Cedefop were also represented.

During the EQAVET ANM 2022, the EQAVET network members discussed progress with the implementation of the EQAVET Framework. The EQAVET network also appointed the new EQAVET Steering Committee for 2022-2024, and discussed questions related to the ongoing work of the EQAVET National Reference Points including the state of play of the first pilot peer reviews and the communication activities of the EQAVET network.

Welcoming words

Koen Bois d'Enghien, DG EMPL, European Commission opened the meeting and updated the EQAVET members on the EU VET policy context and presented the policy developments in quality assurance in VET. End of May 2022 was the deadline for Members States to submit a National Implementation Plan (NIP), outlining how the objectives of the VET Recommendation and the Osnabrück Declaration will be implemented at national level. Currently, the NIPs are analysed by the European Commission in cooperation with Cedefop and European Training Foundation (ETF).

Regarding the green transition, the European Union has the ambitious objective to make Europe the first climate neutral continent in the world by 2050. To achieve this objective, all sectors need to take actions and rethink their policies including the VET sector. For the EQAVET Network, this means concretely that, compared to the period prior to the COVID pandemic, more EQAVET events will be organised online instead of as face-to-face meetings.

DG EMPL also informed the members about the next call for proposal for EQAVET NRPs to be launched after the summer 2022 which introduces some novelties (e.g.: the project duration is extended to 3 years; the budget will be increased, and the submission deadline is expected by the end of January 2023). The Executive Agency (EACEA) will share more detailed information in the coming months.

Stéphane Lardy, Chief Executive of France Compétences, welcomed the participants and provided a brief introduction to [France Competences](#), the French national governance body for vocational training and apprenticeship. One of the key goals of France Competences is to safeguard the quality and efficiency of vocational training and apprenticeships in France.¹

¹ Created by law no° 2018-771 of September 5, 2018 (art. 36)

Update of the EU VET policy context and presentation on policy developments relevant for the context of quality assurance in VET

Following the welcoming session, the European Commission, ETF and Cedefop presented policy developments relevant for the context of quality assurance in VET.

European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability

William O’Keeffe, DG EMPL, European Commission presented key features of the [Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability](#). The constant need to adapt and update skills, knowledge and competences to the current context led to a widespread use of so-called 'micro-credentials', offered by a wide range of providers. Yet, so far, there was no clear and common understanding of micro-credentials, hampering the quality, transparency and transferability of micro-credentials between and within countries, between sectors, from one job to another.

The Commission proposal aims to establish a common European approach to the provision of micro-credentials, through a common definition, standard elements to describe a micro-credential², and principles for the design and the issuance (i.e. quality, transparency, relevance, valid assessment, learning pathways, recognition, portable, learner centred, authentic, information and guidance).

According to the proposal, 'Micro-credential' means the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials.

They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity. At the national level it is important to look at different elements of the education, training and labour market ecosystems (e.g. provider networks, social dialogue, etc.) and ensure that micro-credentials are agreed upon and aligned to the relevant frameworks (e.g. the national qualification framework, training regulations etc.).

The proposal also includes recommendations to the Member States on how to deliver on the potential of micro-credential, including through policies that can support their effective design and use. In the area of Education, training and skills policies it is important to discuss micro-credentials in the context of different types of learners, to link with strategic initiatives, such as the Centres of Vocational Excellence, digital skills and green skills and to support teacher training. In the area of Active Labour Market Policies, micro-credentials can help to address skills challenges (e.g. bottlenecks, skills shortages), upskill and reskill workers, support target

² The Standard Elements to describe a micro-credential included in the proposal are the following: identification of the learner, title of the micro-credential, country/region of the issuer, awarding body, date of issuing, learning outcomes, notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes, level of the learning experience leading to the micro-credential, type of assessment, form of participation in the learning activity, type of quality assurance used to underpin the micro-credential.

groups (e.g. self-employed, vulnerable groups, youth) and provide a flexible tool for self-employed and non-standard workers (including platform workers).

The European Commission plans to support the implementation of these recommendations by developing and adapting existing EU tools; through research and data collection; through technical implementation through Europass and by supporting cooperation between Member States and stakeholders. (*Post-meeting note: The proposal was adopted by the Council on 16 June 2022*)³

³ Cf. press release <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/06/16/council-recommends-european-approach-to-micro-credentials/>

Skills for the green transition

Tim Van Rie, DG EMPL, European Commission gave a presentation on the skills and competences that are needed to make the transition towards climate neutrality across the EU a reality. He highlighted that the [European Green Deal](#) will have an impact on many activities, including agriculture, construction, manufacturing, mobility and transport, energy. The green transition requires a broad spectrum of skills: technical, occupation-specific skills, transversal labour market-related skills and broader citizenship skills.

The [European Sustainability Competence Framework \(GreenComp\)](#), published in 2022 by DG EAC and the Joint Research Centre, is a reference framework for sustainability competences. It can serve as a guidance to educators, providing a consensual definition of what the competence of 'sustainability' entails. It can be applied to education and training programmes at all levels and in any learning setting, formal, non-formal and informal.

The taxonomy of skills for the green transition – more focused on the labour market – has been developed within the framework of the [European Classification of Occupations, Skills and Competences \(ESCO\)](#). 571 ESCO skills and knowledge concepts are labelled as green and include: 381 skills (e.g. install offshore renewable energy systems), 185 knowledge concepts (e.g. geothermal energy systems), 5 transversal skills (e.g. engage other in environmentally-friendly behaviour).

The European Commission is promoting exchanges on innovative and inspiring practices through the European Education Area Working Group on Vocational Education and Training for the Green Transition (2021-2025), which carries out technical exchanges on 2020 VET Recommendations and Osnabrück Declaration, with a focus on green transition. The focus of the [2022 European Vocational Skills Week](#) was also on VET and the green transition.

The EU provides many [funding opportunities](#) to promote skills for the green transition, directly from the European Commission, via intermediaries or national authorities. While some are general opportunities, including also aspects related to the green transition (e.g. Erasmus+, European Social Fund+), others are more specific and tailored (i.e. Just Transition Fund, regions in economic and environmental transition).

Cedefop work on quality assurance supporting EQAVET peer reviews

George Kostakis, Cedefop, presented the work of Cedefop on quality assurance. He highlighted that the [‘VET in Europe’ database](#), which showcase 35 VET systems, can be used for the preparation of EQAVET peer reviews, in order to find information on the VET system of the host country.

Other relevant Cedefop projects include:

1. [Cedefop country’s reviews on skills governance](#) provide technical advice to countries asking for support to improve their ‘governance of skills anticipation and matching’. This is done through an analytical framework focusing on organisation, resources, stakeholders, as well as use of information.
2. Cedefop country reviews based on the [analytical framework for apprenticeships](#), based on 10 areas of analysis, namely: distinguishing features (e.g. alternation of learning, duration, contract etc), place in the ET system in relation to other forms of learning, governance arrangements, offer, content and quality assurance, cooperation among VET providers and employers, participation of and support to employers, requirements and support to teachers and in-company trainers, financing and cost-

sharing mechanisms, apprentices' working and learning conditions, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

3. The [Cedefop study on 'Microcredentials for VET and labour market learning'. Interim findings](#) highlight that quality assurance is an important aspect for the recognition of microcredentials and their potential inclusion in the national quality frameworks. Discussions are ongoing and the EQAVET Network is invited to contribute.
4. Cedefop's policy reporting and analysis on national implementation plans (NIPs) for VET. These provide an overview of the national context and baseline, of the challenges and general objectives of the NIPs, a detailed description of the selected flagship measures and/or their packages, governance of the implementation of the NIPs, as well as expected effects of the NIPs.

The European Training Foundation Quality Assurance Forum

Mounir Baati, European Training Foundation (ETF), presented the Quality Assurance Forum in VET set up by ETF. The ETF Forum for Quality Assurance in VET was established in 2017 as a multi-national collaboration initiative between national institutions. The main objective is to support partner countries to modernise and improve quality assurance in VET by deepening knowledge and building capabilities. The Forum is inspired by the EQAVET Network and follows the EQAVET Framework. Its main activities include the description of VET quality assurance systems, the mapping of EQAVET indicators and the engagement of members in peer learning activities, such as webinars and peer visits. Peer visits provide a form of external feedback from visiting peers on quality assurance development efforts. They put a strong emphasis on the provision of professional feedback given by a group of peers within a structured procedure.

The preparation of peer visits includes the following steps: preparation of the peer visit, peer visit in the country of the host institution, peer feedback to the host institution, follow-up based on the feedback.

A review of the first pilot peer reviews

This session intended for presenting the lessons learnt and improvements to be made following the implementation of the first pilot peer reviews.

The [2020 VET Recommendation](#) encourages the implementation of EU level peer reviews of quality assurance to improve the mutual learning, enhance the transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements in the provision of vocational education and training. A peer review is a type of voluntary mutual learning activity based on a specific methodology developed in four phases and ten steps. Each Member State can decide on the topics and the focus of the peer review and the EQAVET Secretariat Peer Review team will support, in cooperation with external experts, the preparation and implementation of these PRs. The methodology of the peer review was further explained in the EQAVET Community development sessions.

Peer Reviews were integrated in the EACEA call for proposals for NRPs 2021-2023 and 21 NRPs submitted their PR topics, together with suggestions for Peer Review countries as part of their project proposal. Each country will host one peer review and act as peer in five others and the matching exercise among peers was completed by the EQAVET Secretariat.

The EQAVET Secretariat developed tools, templates and training sessions to support the peer review process:

- A Peer Review manual sets out the process and presents a set of templates that can support the work related to each step and phase
- So far, two training sessions took place explaining the PR methods, roles and responsibilities and allowing participants to ask questions on the process. From July 2022, a standardised webinar will replace the training session.
- The EQAVET community space includes a private channel dedicated to exchange information and documents on each peer review.

The first pilot peer reviews were hosted by Spain and the Czech Republic and took place 30-31 March and 13-14 June 2022. Due to travel restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic, the two pilot peer reviews took place online. Following the first two meetings, the below lessons learnt were identified:

- Dates for the peer review need to be confirmed well in advance considering that the agenda of peers is busy, and the preparation and implementation process requires several online and face-to-face meetings.
- A minimum of three-month lead-in time is needed (more is better) to give enough time for the host country to prepare the concept note, the self-assessment report and invite experts.
- In-depth kick-off meetings between the EQAVET Secretariat and the host country add value to the process because the host country can ask specific questions related to the support available, the different steps of the process, and framing of the peer review topic.
- The national expert supporting the process is often nominated by the host countries based on previous experiences. This expert can be internal or external or can be suggested by the EQAVET Secretariat, if needed. The expert should have good knowledge of the host countries activities related to QA in VET and should ideally also be familiar with the peer review process. He/she should support the host country in the facilitation of meetings and provide input and presentations.
- The first two peer reviews were implemented as virtual meetings. While both meetings were regarded as very fruitful exchanges, network members highlighted the added value of face-to-face peer reviews.
- An additional peer discussion meeting can be added to the process to reflect on initial reactions to host country self-assessment. This informal meeting allows peers to share their first impressions and identify questions that need clarification.
- Feedbacks received after the two pilot PRs underlined the importance to develop the Agenda of the PR meeting jointly with the peers and the host country (as part of Step 5), to ensure the agenda reflects the peers' need for discussion. Input for practitioners is always appreciated and give a more concrete dimension to the PR topics.
- The peers' feedback phase is an important part of the process that requires attention. The peer review Agenda should allow for at least two hours of discussion between the peers. In some cases, an additional session might need to be scheduled after the Peer Review has taken place, to allow enough time for reflection.
- A Memorandum of Understanding is a support document used in case the host country would like to underline the confidentiality of the meeting or protect the identity of certain participants. It is not mandatory to use it and some NRPs considered that they are part of a well-established network and the relationship among the peers can be trusted. The decision is up to the host countries' discretion.

- EQAVET Network members mentioned that they are interested in the results from the peer reviews, which could technically be shared on the EQAVET Community Space. The decision to publish the peer's feedback report remains with the host country.

Finally, the EQAVET Secretariat invited the NRPs to confirm dates and teams for PRs in 2023, as well as national experts. During the summer, the Secretariat will work on the revision of the EQAVET PR Manual and templates based on feedback received during this session and the EQAVET Community session.

EQAVET website and EQAVET Community Space: Feedback from the Network

The EQAVET Secretariat summarised recent work on the [EQAVET web pages](#) and the EQAVET Community Space. The Secretariat underlined that the EQAVET webpages on europa.eu are external-facing and address the general public, hence a target audience with low to medium knowledge of EQAVET, whereas the EQAVET community space was designed for sharing information and communicating within the EQAVET Network.

EQAVET web pages

The previous standalone EQAVET website was discontinued, and its content was integrated into the European Commission's EUROPA website and into the DG EMPL's web presence, as part of the wider EC policy to integrate relevant external content into the EUROPA web pages.

In 2021, the standalone website and contents were reviewed in two stages:

- A first level review – along document type, within timeframe parameters agreed with the European Commission
- A detailed content audit using the assessment matrix that was shared with the Network ahead of the 2021 Annual Network Meeting
- The content audit included a review of GDPR compliance of all documents.

The EQAVET Secretariat presented the draft structure of the new web pages during the 2021 Annual Network Meeting. It was highlighted that the new web pages need to be in line with the limitations of the DG EMPL web page. These include limits on the number of subpages and visuals (one visual per page). Interactive elements are not possible; and the layout and look and feel must be in line with the [visual identity guidelines for EUROPA web pages](#). In addition, the EQAVET Secretariat does not have full editorial rights and all content, including changes to the virtual library, must be approved by the DG EMPL web team.

As a result of the feedback received from the Network and the Steering Committee throughout the process, the EQAVET Secretariat has:

- Reviewed the content for consistency
- Undertaken user testing with people not familiar with EQAVET to ensure that the text is easy to understand
- Reviewed and improved the tagging system for the virtual library
- Developed a new sub-page on the EQAVET framework
- Reviewed and extended interesting content from the previous standalone website

The website is not static, and it continues to be further developed. The next steps are to:

- Continue to undertake regular maintenance and liaising with the DG EMPL web team where needed, including solving ad hoc issues (such as with the virtual library) and updating the landing page on a quarterly basis
- Uploading news items at least once a month
- Finalise the dedicated page on the National Reference Points
- Expand the virtual library with other useful documents and with new content
- Develop and establish a dedicated activity/event page, with a summary of all EQAVET Network meetings
- Review all web pages and make improvements to ensure the pages are linked (where possible) and user-friendly
- Continue to take onboard feedback from the Network to further improve and enhance the web pages

Participants offered some suggestions for the National Reference Point web page, which will be taken forward with DG EMPL. Issues with the visibility of documents in the virtual library were flagged up. The EQAVET Secretariat confirmed they are aware of these issues and have notified DG EMPL web team. Once the issues are resolved, the Network will be informed via the community space.

New EQAVET community space

The EQAVET community space was introduced as a result of the discussions from the 2021 Annual Network Meeting. It provides a central place to share information internal to the Network, particularly in relation to onboarding new members; storing central documents on how the Network works in practice; preparation of Peer Reviews and preparation of other Network events. The EQAVET Secretariat provided a live demonstration on how to use the community space.

The next steps for the community space include:

- Further developing events resource pages, adding documents prepared for PLAs and other Network events
- Further developing the Peer Review space
- Further developing the engagement of the EQAVET community and collaboration between EQAVET Network members, including publishing regular posts and sharing information and updates on Network activities

Workshops

Topic 1: Graduate tracking

The [2017 Council Recommendation on tracking graduates](#) recommends improving the quality and availability of data about activities of graduates, especially regarding labour market transition. The Recommendation covers all programmes and qualifications at EQF Level 4 and above including VET and Higher Education. In some countries the approach to graduate tracking in the VET and Higher Education sectors is the same and these countries are implementing a more systematic and common approach to graduate tracking. In other countries, the approach to graduate tracking in the VET sector varies and relies more on individual VET providers who are developing and promoting their own graduate tracking system or methods. **Nino Buic from the Croatian NRP** presented a pilot project to develop a more consistent approach across VET providers, to get a better view on the use of Croatian VET graduates' acquired skills in the workplace (cf. EQAVET indicators 5 and 6).

In Croatia, about 70% of learners at upper secondary level participate in VET⁴. Despite the high level of participation, the VET sector suffers from negative image among students and parents. Therefore, Croatia needs better insights into the employability and destinations of students to further improve educational programmes, raise attractiveness of VET programmes and retain skills.

The approach to this project was based on national strategic priorities for VET as well as EU policy framework for Skills, VET, Quality Assurance and Graduate Tracking. The development of the methodology and the implementation of this model of tracking of VET graduates has been implemented in three EQAVET NRP project cycles: 2017-2019, 2019-2021, 2021-2023.

The approach of the model is built on a bottom-up data collection system mainly consisting of two surveys:

1. An exit survey for IVET graduates that identifies the socioeconomic data of students, gathers information about their plans and provides consent and contact information. The main challenge of the exit survey was to reach students because many of them did not receive or reply to emails.
2. A main survey, which takes place after a certain period and questions students' experience and outcomes of VET through self-assessment. The purpose of the main survey is to provide feedback to VET providers on students' satisfaction, destination and use of acquired skills at the workplace. The data collected include: relevance of completed VET programmes, data on work contracts and salary, relevance of skills attained in VET contrasted to work demands, job satisfaction and career aspirations, first/current job, etc.

Nino Buic explained that the provider engagement increased from one cycle to the next. In the first pilot phase (autumn 2018), only 3 providers took part in the project based on students graduated in 2017. In the second phase (autumn 2020), four new VET providers joined and in the third phase (autumn 2022), 11 new members got involved; so that the project now covers a total of 18 VET-providers.

According to the VET providers participating in this pilot project, the model is useful, straightforward and feasible but still demands a lot of resources from the VET providers and teachers. However, VET providers recognised the importance of a data gathering exercise to increase the quality of VET programmes and teaching.

The Croatian NRP has the ambition to extend the geographical scope and the types of qualifications covered. There are plans to build on the results and the model to develop a national approach, possibly in the new ESF programming period 2021 – 2027.

During the group discussions with the workshop's participants, some key elements for graduate tracking were highlighted:

- A bottom-up approach seems to be the most valuable to engage learners, VET providers and relevant stakeholders.
- Engaging VET providers in promoting and disseminating the projects results increase the commitment of other VET providers. In Croatia, the number of participating VET providers increased from 3 providers to 18 over a period of 3 years.

⁴ <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/croatia-2019>

- Implementing a graduate tracking approach allows the VET providers to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to reflect on the adequacy of curriculum and teaching.
- Sharing practices and tools from the VET sectors and Higher Education sectors could support the development of a more systematic consistent approach tailored for the VET sector.
- Collaboration with employers could improve the consistency of collected data and their comparability. In Greece, they have implemented the same two cycles of surveys for IVET graduates in cooperation with employers.
- Data protection and GDPR regulations are still a challenge for many countries and require adapting the methods to reach students after their graduation.

Topic 2: Involvement of the students in the process of quality assurance

Involvement of students is an important aspect of quality assurance processes. The EQAVET quality criteria includes reference to involving stakeholders and it states that implementation plans are devised in consultation with stakeholders. In addition, EQAVET indicator 6 refers to satisfaction rates of individuals and employers with the acquired skills and competences. Therefore, students are an important stakeholder to gather feedback from. It is important that the feedback is meaningful, and the learning is embedded into future practices.

Gonnie van der Eerden from Dutch NRP, presented the involvement of students in the Dutch process of quality assurance. In 2020, the Minister of Education stressed that the involvement of students in quality assurance in VET. The following questions were used as a starting point:

- What subjects are relevant/suitable for student participant?
- How to reach a broad(er) group of students?
- How to ensure that every student feels heard?
- How to deepen the conversation about the quality of education?
- How does student participation get embedded into the structure?

Different stakeholders were engaged in the process. This included mentors; students; teachers and student representatives as well as policy advisors; quality assurance advisors and the Ministry of Education.

Eight steps were established towards student involvement. These were:

1. What does student participation mean?
2. What is already in place to involve students and how do they experience this?
3. How do the students want to be involved?
4. What do we want to achieve?
5. What types of participation fit?
6. Is there a difference in experiencing participation between students and teachers?
7. Do we achieve what we want to achieve?
8. What means support to our approach?

A series of videos were produced as conversation starters with the aim of finding out what suits' students within different schools, and how can teachers/trainers work with it. The videos were designed to be used during lessons, sessions with students, teachers, administrators and support services and school vision meetings.

Participants discussed what practices exist in relation to the involvement of students in the process of quality assurance in their countries. Several countries mentioned that they

undertake questionnaires or surveys after course completion (France, Norway), or in some cases there are questionnaires undertaken at different stages. For example, an initial questionnaire within one month of the personal competence development plan is approved and a final stage questionnaire (Finland). In some countries, such as Germany, interviews with students are included as part of wider quality assurance processes of VET schools. It was also mentioned that in some countries that student feedback is not mandatory.

Participants also reflected on the main challenges and possible solutions to get students involved in quality assurance processes. These included motivation of VET providers as they may be afraid of receiving negative feedback. One solution is to link funding to the quality assurance process.

In addition, participants noted that it can be challenging to encourage buy-in from students. This can be overcome by involving them in the design phase and being clear on how their feedback is used and what changes have been made following their feedback. Where questionnaires are used, there can be low response rates within student bodies particularly for those undertaken after course completion. Incentives can be offered to encourage responses. At organisational level there is often a challenge of creating a learning culture where quality assurance is embedded, activities are meaningful, and they lead to positive changes.

Student involvement in quality assurance is an area that many countries want to further develop. Further work is needed to involve student participation at all levels, ensuring that they are included throughout all phases of the quality cycle, in the planning and design as well as the implementation, evaluation and review. Student involvement can help VET schools to (re-)consider their vision and mission and ultimately help them to become the organisations they want to be and to deliver high quality VET training that meets student needs as well as those from employers and the local, regional and national labour market.

EQAVET Community development sessions

Topic 1: EQAVET Network for beginners

During this session, EQAVET network members that joined since 2020 had an opportunity to get an introduction to the concept and objectives of EQAVET, and the key developments on EQAVET since its introduction in 2009. The EQAVET Secretariat gave an overview on the [EQAVET framework](#), including the indicators and indicative descriptors. Progress with the implementation of EQAVET was discussed, with a special focus on the role of the EQAVET Network.

Topic 2: Training session for the participants in peer reviews

During this session, the EQAVET Secretariat offered training to participants of upcoming peer reviews, guiding them through the phases and steps of the peer review process, providing concrete examples for the different steps and work to be undertaken. The roles and responsibilities of the hosts and peers were outlined and the supporting tools and services available were presented.

This training built on the experience from two introductory webinars organised by the EQAVET Secretariat in March and April 2022 for the National Reference Points (NRPs) representatives

involved in the first two Peer Reviews of 2022⁵. Participants had the opportunity to raise questions and exchange experiences related to the organisation of a peer review (e.g.: actual preparatory time, specific task as a host country, role of the national expert). Some key lessons learnt were highlighted by those participants with experience in organising peer reviews within the EQAVET context:

- Peer feedback is a crucial part of the peer review and hence, the importance of allocating enough time in the agenda for peers to reflect. A few participants highlighted how lengthy the process to reach a consensus can be.
- The nomination of a facilitator prior to the peer review can play an important role in guiding the peers feedback discussion and enhance the discussions on the day.
- Key messages from the peers' feedback session are perceived as a useful piece of information for the peers' contribution to the feedback report to be provided to the host after the peer review.
- Circulating the background material well in advance and allowing time for the peers to prepare their participation in the peer review can help boosting the discussions on the day.

To further support NRPs in their roles, both as host and peers, a standardised introduction webinar will be recorded by the EQAVET Secretariat and published on the EQAVET Network community space (on MS Teams) in July 2022 so that NRPs and EQAVET Network members can access it at their convenience.

Topic 3: Improving communication within the EQAVET Network

Members of the EQAVET network gathered to discuss opportunities to improve communication within the EQAVET network. Two key questions structured the exchange of the participants:

- How can the EQAVET secretariat improve communication within the EQAVET network in a user-friendly and engaging way?
- What would EQAVET network members like to see on their community space?

Participants reflected on the purposes of the communication within the EQAVET network and identified the sharing of information and the cooperation between countries as their priority. They stressed the importance of having easy access to information. They made several recommendations to develop the communication divided between two strands.

Suggestions to improve the website:

- The promotion of the work of the network could be strengthened by making the website more user-friendly and information more visible.
- One webpage should be dedicated to the National Reference Points and Ministry representatives and include their contact details to facilitate the identification of the EQAVET network members as well as the cooperation between them.
- The scope of documents available on the website could be widened to include background documents of interest to the EQAVET network such as European Commission brochures on VET or old EQAVET newsletters.

Suggestions to improve the community space:

⁵ Peer Review hosted by Spain on 30-31 March 2022 and Peer Review planned in the Czech Republic on 13 – 14 June 2022.

- The community space should be well moderated and attractive to engage actively members of the network. Useful resources regarding EQAVET activities that cannot be shared publicly on the website, such as Peer Reviews documents, should be made available there. Regular posts on the community space could provide space for discussion and reflection on specific topics in various formats such as short surveys, as well as inform EQAVET members on updates of the network such as the latest EQAVET newsletter.
- Professional profiles of the EQAVET network members could be made available with details regarding their organisation, their function, the projects they are involved in, their experience in EQAVET as well as their background to facilitate networking and cooperation.
- A guidance document on MS Teams could be beneficial to members who are not familiar with Microsoft environment.

OECD Project on improving Quality Assurance of Adult Education and Training

Ricardo Espinoza, OECD, presented the ongoing project of the OECD on *Improving Quality Assurance of Adult Education and Training*. He underlined that training is of crucial importance to re-skill and up-skill adults, especially since the COVID crisis. A growing demand for high performing skills systems has been observed and resulted in the successful deployment of new funding schemes such as individual learning accounts. Quality assurance has an important role to play in their implementation to ensure that funding efforts achieve their strategic objectives.

Quality assurance systems still face important challenges today. If formal adult education and training benefits from well-established mechanisms in place, non-formal education is highly decentralized, differs substantially from country to country and has no common framework to assess and compare quality assurance systems across OECD countries. The OECD started to focus on non-formal education a few years ago as the organisation identified a gap on the topic.

The OECD project is working on defining a framework to conceptualise different quality assurance systems, developing qualitative indicators to characterise quality assurance systems and mapping and comparing the different quality assurance systems. The aim of the project is to facilitate the understanding of quality assurance systems and practices across OECD countries, identify best practices, peer-learning opportunities and inform policy reforms.

The project has focused so far on a sample of twelve countries but will be extended to cover all OECD countries.

Highlights from the work of four EQAVET NRPs

The quality certification Qualiopi in France

Elena Altukhova, French NRP coordinator, presented the most recent evolutions of the regulation of quality assurance in France based on the 2018 French law on professional future. At system level, diploma registered in the French National Register of Professional Qualifications undergo strict quality control. At provider level, a new quality standard was created to provide more harmonisation and transparency, the National Quality Reference

Framework which is the basis for training providers to obtain their quality certification 'QUALIOPI'. The reform allowed for greater transparency for learners and gave them more freedom to develop their competencies thanks to the individual learning accounts (CPF).

QUALIOPI can be obtained through two ways, one of the 33 certifying bodies accredited by the French accreditation committee (COFRAC) or one of the seven labelling bodies which can give both their label, respecting the National Quality Framework, and QUALIOPI. The double strand allows VET providers part of a network to have both QUALIOPI for access to public funding and the label of their network, for instance license driving schools.

At the end of May 2022, 37,605 VET providers have been certified in France, representing a third of all VET and non-VET providers registered in the country. Higher education establishments can also be VET providers and should therefore be concerned by the QUALIOPI obligation but the 2018 law allows to set up annual conference to ensure consistency of the quality system instead.

The quality framework for IVET institutions in Greece

Antonios Glaros, Greek NRP coordinator, presented the new Quality Assurance System approach for implementation in Initial Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) in Greece. IEK are IVET providers of EQF level 5 providing upper post-secondary VET programmes of 2.5 years. IVET graduates with level 5 national certificate are entitled to pursue tertiary education.

The law 4763/2020 reformed the Greek VET system to ensure an integrated, systematic, comprehensive and cohesive system bridging VET and the labour market, as well as enhancing the attractiveness of VET and lifelong learning. The law led to the establishment of Career and Professional Development Offices in all IEK. The 2021 ministerial decision 'Operating Regulation of IVET Institutes (IEK) under the jurisdiction of General Secretariat for VET, LLL and Youth' sets the legal framework for the implementation of Quality Assurance System. A forthcoming ministerial decision will provide guidelines for implementing the system.

The quality assurance system relies on five criteria: leadership management planning, provision of VET, infrastructure equipment resources, innovation extroversion and results outcomes. The criteria follow the EQAVET quality cycle. Providers are allowed to have additional criteria. The quality assessment process follows five steps: target setting, self-assessment, development of improvement plans, on site visit for external assessment and publication of assessment results. Only the final assessment score is published to encourage VET providers.

A project about the role of intermediary organisations in the QA of dual VET in Germany

Helena Sabbagh, German NRP coordinator, presented a German study on the quality initiatives of intermediary institutions. If quality assurance is central to the viability and attractiveness of the system, it represents a challenge for companies and especially SMEs. Growing difficulties to find and retain trainees have been observed in some regions and industries of the country, resulting in an increasing interest in external support. At the same time, a variety of special activities at intermediary level has emerged, in particular from chamber organisations.

The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) decided to conduct a study to have a better understanding of the offers of the chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHK) and of Skilled Crafts (HwK). The study was based on literature and online research as well

phone interviews and an online survey. The survey had a high response rate of 84% which allowed for comprehensive quantitative and qualitative evaluation.

Key findings of the study are that quality initiatives of the chambers are significant, diverse and innovative. 192 individual initiatives were recorded among a 100 out of the 132 IHKs and HwKs. Initiatives concern five main topics: awarding, training, counselling, networking and work aid initiatives. The initiatives are based on the principles of quality management system but are tailored to the needs of the companies. Quality initiatives are used for the promotion of raising quality as complementary instruments to the regular activities of the chambers for less regulated process quality.

Once finalised, the study will be available on [the website of BIBB](#) (in German language).

EQAVET-based quality management system for formal VET institutions in Hungary
Katalin Stadler, Hungarian country representative, presented the EQAVET-based quality management system for formal VET institutions in Hungary. In 2021, a comprehensive reform took place in the VET system. VET institutions are required to elaborate their own quality management system by 31 August 2022 with criteria and measuring tools based on the EQAVET Framework. VET quality management systems are evaluated through three different methods:

1. Comprehensive institutional self-evaluation should be conducted every two years against the 21 VET-specific EQAVET-based institutional self-evaluation criteria. The self-evaluation aims to identify strengths and areas for improvement for the institution and its head. The focus is on the personal engagement and role of the head in different activities and on their leadership competences. As part of the self-evaluation, partners are surveyed against their needs and satisfaction of the system. After the self-evaluation, institutions must plan, implement and evaluate improvement actions.
2. VET teacher-trainer evaluation system should be conducted every three years based on the methodology proposed by the Ministry responsible for VET. Institutions are evaluated toward their strategic goals and quality objectives as well as the organisation framework of their system and the conditions for its operation. Ten evaluation areas should be assessed on the given job as well as the professional competences and performances of the VET teachers and trainers. Twenty-four indicators should be measured. The process model focuses on three areas: leadership-management, education-teaching-training and support functions and providing resources.
3. The Innovative Training Support Centre evaluates externally VET quality management systems every four years.

Meeting close

The European Commission thanked the participants for their attendance and announced that the 2023 EQAVET Annual Network meeting is planned to take place in June 2023 in Sweden.

Annex

EQAVET Work Programme 2nd semester 2022 (last update: 21 June 2022)

	July/August	September	October	November	December
Mutual learning	- / -	1 Peer Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latvia: 21-22/09 	3 Peer Reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luxembourg: 13-14/10 Bulgaria: 18-19/10 Italy: 26-27/10 	2 Peer Reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Germany: 14-15/11 Slovakia: 22-23/11 Online PLA on QA of microcredentials (8-9/11, tbc)	2 Peer Reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Croatia: 1-2/12 Finland: 7-8/12
Other activities	Analysis of survey results Revision of Peer Review Manual	EQAVET Newsletter Analysis of survey results (continuation)	Draft Annual Survey report Steering Committee meeting (18/10)	Final Survey Report	EQAVET Newsletter (tbc)

Preview: EQAVET work programme 2023

- EQAVET webinar (January 2023)
- Annual Network Meeting in Sweden (June 2023)
- EQAVET PLA (October/November 2023)
- 11 Peer Reviews, spread across the year (cf. Peer Review calendar on the Community Space)
- EQAVET Newsletters and regular updates of webpage