



Cedefop Director James Calleja praised Malta's efforts to draft a national quality assurance framework for further and higher education based on the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area (ESG) and a European quality assurance in VET (EQAVET) perspective.

Mr Calleja was one of three 'international critical friends' invited by Malta's National Commission for Further and Higher Education to address a consultation conference on 25 July. Over 165 participants discussed the draft framework, which includes elements of both the ESG and the EQAVET principles.

In his address, the Cedefop Director spoke about the holistic approach of the framework policy, aiming at a quality culture that cuts across vocational training and training (VET) and higher education (HE). He referred to its added value of permeability between VET and HE and its link to other European tools.

Mr Calleja said that with synergies between European tools being challenged by practice in actual education and training situations, quality assurance is an important bridge that links the learning outcomes approach, the credit system, the certificate supplement and the multidimensional role of the national qualifications framework.

The framework is 'a tangible attempt at building trust in Malta's qualification system at national, European and global scale; it predetermines sound, robust qualifications based on a learning outcomes approach, which in VET's case should take occupational standards into account; it establishes a forum for sharing expertise and experience from different educational sectors and quality control of qualifications at national level, as well as a point of reference and a referencing device.'

Mr Calleja called the document a laudable example of how European tools can generate synergy, of how the text itself communicates a culture that stakeholders could find noteworthy in their efforts to attract more learners to VET and HE, of how a quality culture is built more

Quality assurance challenges synergies between European tools

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effectively and nationwide and for quality agencies to be at all times in a learning 'mode' to implement the framework policy better.

He added: 'The quality framework is a first step towards building a national culture for quality that grips all forms of learning. This in itself is a challenge; only experience of implementing a quality assurance framework policy will illustrate the extent to which we can claim that synergies between European tools work efficiently and effectively.'

The one-day conference was characterised by strong participation of social partners, private training providers in vocational training and higher education as well as non-governmental organisations providing informal and non-formal learning.

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