



Procedure file

Basic information	
COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Recommendation 2008/0069(COD)	Procedure completed
European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training	
Subject 4.40.01 European area for education, training and lifelong learning 4.40.15 Vocational education and training 4.40.20 Cooperation and agreements in the fields of education, training and youth	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		06/05/2008
		PSE ANDERSSON Jan	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	CULT Culture and Education (Associated committee)		10/06/2008
		ALDE MĂNESCU Ramona Nicole	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	2941	11/05/2009
	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	2868	21/05/2008
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	FIGEL' Ján	

Key events			
08/04/2008	Legislative proposal published	COM(2008)0179	Summary
24/04/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
21/05/2008	Debate in Council	2868	
19/06/2008	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
05/11/2008	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
11/11/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A6-0438/2008	
17/12/2008	Debate in Parliament		
18/12/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/12/2008	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T6-0627/2008	Summary
11/05/2009	Act adopted by Council after Parliament's		

	1st reading		
18/06/2009	Final act signed		
18/06/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		
08/07/2009	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2008/0069(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Recommendation
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 150-p4; EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 149-p4
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	EMPL/6/62096

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		COM(2008)0179	09/04/2008	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2008)0440	09/04/2008	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2008)0441	09/04/2008	EC	
Committee draft report		PE409.652	25/07/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE412.293	22/09/2008	EP	
Committee opinion	CULT	PE409.521	07/10/2008	EP	
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		CES1677/2008	23/10/2008	ESC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A6-0438/2008	11/11/2008	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T6-0627/2008	18/12/2008	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2009)402	29/01/2009	EC	
Draft final act		03746/2008/LEX	18/06/2009	CSL	
Follow-up document		COM(2014)0030	28/01/2014	EC	Summary

Additional information

National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act

[EP/Council Recommendation 2009/708](#)
[OJ C 155 08.07.2009, p. 0001](#) Summary

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

PURPOSE: to establish a 'European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training'.

PROPOSED ACT: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: several initiatives already exist in this area (e.g. [Recommendation on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education](#) which provides standards and guidelines for quality assurance and the [Recommendation on the European Quality Charter for Mobility](#) which introduced quality assurance concepts in developing and implementing actions in support of mobility).

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an important element of the EU's drive to become more competitive and socially cohesive. The creation of a knowledge-based society underpinning the Lisbon strategy needs to be based on investment in, and improvement of, the quality of human resources. Across the EU VET is organised at a national and regional level with different standards leading to different qualifications. This diversity means that there is huge scope for mutual learning and for an EU-wide reflection about future organisation. And it also means that Europe requires common points of reference to ensure transparency, consistency and portability between the many streams of development across Europe. All of this should happen without infringing the Member States' autonomy in the governance of VET systems.

In 2003 the EU adopted a 'Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET' or CQAF. However, the quality criteria, indicative descriptors and indicators supporting implementation of the CQAF are insufficient and make the instrument difficult to generalise. Indeed, many EU Member States have underlined the need to strengthen the status of the CQAF.

The Framework forms part of a series of measures designed to support continuous improvement in the quality and governance of VET systems. These include the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF - see [COD/2006/0163](#)), the European Credit System for VET (ECVET- see [COD/2008/0070](#)), and the common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.

CONTENT: the Framework should be a means of giving new impetus to the continuous improvement of quality management practices and, ultimately, of VET systems. The Framework fully respects the competence of the Member States. It seeks to stimulate:

- the creation of more developed and consistent quality assurance and improvement systems across countries;
- increased transparency of quality assurance and improvement systems and approaches in VET, to improve mutual trust and facilitate mobility;
- co-operation and mutual learning, to foster stakeholder involvement in a culture of quality improvement and accountability at all levels.

Recommendations to the Member States:

- use and further develop the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, quality criteria, indicative descriptors and reference indicators as set out in Annexes 1 and 2, to further improve, reform and develop their VET systems, support lifelong learning strategies and the implementation of the EQF and promote a culture of quality improvement at all levels;
- devise a national approach for implementing the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework not later than 2010, involving the social partners and all other relevant stakeholders in accordance with national legislation and practice. This should include the identification of a number of common indicators to assess and monitor progress and to support review;
- participate actively in the ENQA-VET as a basis for further development of common principles, reference criteria and indicators, guidelines and tools for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local levels, as appropriate;
- designate a Quality Assurance National Reference Point (hereinafter QANRP) for VET that brings together existing relevant bodies and involves the social partners and all stakeholders concerned at national and regional levels, in order to ensure the follow-up of initiatives and efficient dissemination of information. The reference points should: i) keep a wide range of stakeholders informed about the European Network's activities; ii) provide active support to the implementation of the European Network's Work Programme; iii) take concrete initiatives to promote further development of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework in the national context;
- undertake a review of the implementation process every three years. The national reviews will contribute to a European review to be organised by the Commission.

Recommendations to the Commission:

- support Member States in carrying out the above tasks, in particular by facilitating cooperation and mutual learning, testing and developing guidance material, and providing information on quality developments in VET across EU countries;
- develop the role of ENQAVET in contributing to policy development in this area through concrete proposals and initiatives;
- monitor the action taken by the Member States in response to this Recommendation and report, three years after its adoption, to the European Parliament and the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review of this Recommendation.

Use of the Framework will be voluntary. Its main users will be public authorities and the bodies charged with quality assurance and improvement.

Annexes: the Framework comprises: a quality assurance and improvement cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment and review of VET, supported by common quality criteria (annex 1 to the proposal), indicative descriptors and indicators (annex 2 to the proposal). The set of indicators will be further developed through European cooperation on a bilateral and/or multilateral basis, building on European data and national registers.

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopted a report drafted by Jan ANDERSON (PES, SE) and made some amendments to the proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training. An introductory text to the Annexes asserts the voluntary character of the recommendation.

The main amendments ? made in 1st reading of the codecision procedure ? are as follows :

With regard to the Recommendations, Members state the following:

Recommendation 1 : extra emphasis should be placed on the transition from vocational education and training to higher education;

Recommendation 2 : Members States should each devise, not later than 24 months after the adoption of the Recommendation, an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level, where appropriate, and making best use of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, involving inter alia, regional and local governments;

Recommendation 4: the reference points should, amongst others : keep a wide range of stakeholders informed about the activities of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network ; provide active support to the implementation of the work programme of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network; support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance which allows the measurement of success and the identification of areas for improvement in respect of the implementation of the European Network's Work Programme; ensure that information is disseminated to stakeholders effectively;

Recommendation 5 : Member States should undertake a review of the implementation process every 4 years (rather than 3 years as the Commission had proposed) ? such review to be incorporated into alternate national progress reports drawn up within the context of the future strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ? on the basis of reference criteria to be defined under the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network in cooperation with the Commission and the Member States;

Intention 2: this is amended to state the Commission intends to promote and participate together with the Member States in the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network, contributing to policy development in this area through concrete proposals and initiatives, as needed;

Intention 3: the Commission will ensure follow-up to the implementation of this Recommendation by presenting a report every four years (rather than 3 years) to the European Parliament, the Council and the local and regional governments on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review of this Recommendation conducted in cooperation with the Member States and involving the various stakeholders. A new clause states that the Commission will undertake, on the basis of the report and in cooperation with the Member States, an evaluation of the implementation of this Recommendation and, if necessary, its revision.

Annexes: a new introduction to the Annexes reads as follows: the Recommendation proposes the adoption of a VET quality assurance and improvement cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment, review or revision) based on a selection of quality criteria, descriptors and indicators applicable to quality management at the level of both systems and training providers. The aim is not to introduce new standards, but to support Member States' efforts, whilst preserving the diversity of their approaches. The Quality Framework should be regarded rather as a "toolbox", from which the various users may choose those descriptors and indicators they consider most relevant to the requirements of their particular quality assurance system. The proposed descriptors (Annex 1) and indicators (Annex 2) are provided for guidance only and may be selected and applied by users of the Quality Assurance Reference Framework in accordance with all or part of their requirements and existing settings.

They may be applied to initial vocational training (IVT) and/or continuous vocational training (CVT), depending on the relevant individual characteristics of each Member State's VET system and the type of VET providers.

They are to be used on a purely voluntary basis, taking account of their potential added value and in accordance with national legislation and practice. They should be considered neither as benchmarks, nor as a means of reporting on, or drawing comparisons between, the quality and efficiency of different national systems. The responsibility for monitoring the quality of these systems remains entirely with the Member States.

Annex 1: the committee made some amendments to this Annex.

Annex 2: the title is changed to a reference set of selected quality indicators for assessing quality in VET. The introduction notes that in terms of their nature and purpose, they should be distinguished from the indicators and benchmarks referred to in the Council conclusions of 25 May 2007 on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Furthermore, the table of indicators does not include aggregated indicators at national level in cases where these do not exist or are difficult to obtain. The aggregation of such indicators at national level can be carried out at a later stage on the basis of a joint agreement between the Member States, the Commission and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network. The committee made some amendments to Annex 2.

Lastly, it should be noted that this proposal is closely linked to the proposal on the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). (Please see [COD/2008/0070](#)).

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

The European Parliament adopted by 561 votes to 16 with 10 abstentions, a legislative resolution amending the proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training. The report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Jan ANDERSON (PES, SE), on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. The amendments were the result of a compromise between the Council and the Parliament. The main amendments - adopted under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure - were as follows:

- an introductory text to the Annexes asserts the voluntary character of the recommendation;

- a new recital notes that the reference indicators proposed in Annex 2 to the Recommendation are intended to support the evaluation and quality improvement of VET systems and/or providers in accordance with national legislation and practice, and to serve as a "toolbox" from which the various users may choose the indicators they consider most relevant to the requirements of their particular quality assurance system. In terms of their nature and purpose, they should be distinguished from the indicators and benchmarks referred to in the Council conclusions of 25 May 2007 on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training ;

- the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, if used and further developed by the Member States, could help them to further improve and develop their VET systems, support lifelong learning strategies, further European labour market integration and the

implementation of the EQF and promote a culture of quality improvement at all levels, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems;

- the Recommendation should contribute to modernising education and training systems, improving the effectiveness of training by seeking to ensure that people do not leave without qualifications, improving the interrelationship of education, training and employment, building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning and expanding the awarding of qualifications on the basis of experience acquired.

With regard to the Recommendations, Parliament stated the following:

Recommendation 1 : this must refer to the European Quality Charter for Mobility and extra emphasis should be placed on the transition from vocational education and training to higher education;

Recommendation 2 : Member States should each devise, not later than 24 months after the adoption of the Recommendation, an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level, where appropriate, and making best use of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, involving inter alia, regional and local authorities;

Recommendation 4: the reference points should, amongst others : keep a wide range of stakeholders informed about the activities of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network ; provide active support to the implementation of the work programme of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network; support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance which allows the measurement of success and the identification of areas for improvement in respect of the implementation of the European Network's Work Programme; ensure that information is disseminated to stakeholders effectively;

Recommendation 5 : Member States should undertake a review of the implementation process every 4 years (rather than 3 years as the Commission had proposed) ? such review to be incorporated into alternate national progress reports drawn up within the context of the future strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ? on the basis of reference criteria to be defined under the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network in cooperation with the Commission and the Member States;

Intention 2: this is amended to state the Commission intends to promote and participate together with the Member States in the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network, contributing to policy development in this area through concrete proposals and initiatives, as needed;

Intention 3: the Commission will ensure follow-up to the implementation of this Recommendation by presenting a report every four years to the European Parliament and the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review of this Recommendation conducted in cooperation with the Member States and involving the various stakeholders;

Intention 4: the Commission will undertake, on the basis of the report and in cooperation with the Member States, an evaluation of the implementation of this Recommendation and, if necessary, its revision.

Annexes: a new introduction to the Annexes reads as follows: the Recommendation proposes the adoption of a VET quality assurance and improvement cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment, review or revision) based on a selection of quality criteria, descriptors and indicators applicable to quality management at the level of both systems and training providers. The aim is not to introduce new standards, but to support Member States' efforts, whilst preserving the diversity of their approaches.

The Quality Framework should be regarded rather as a "toolbox", from which the various users may choose those descriptors and indicators they consider most relevant to the requirements of their particular quality assurance system.

The proposed descriptors (Annex 1) and indicators (Annex 2) are provided for guidance only and may be selected and applied by users of the Quality Assurance Reference Framework in accordance with all or part of their requirements and existing settings.

They may be applied to initial vocational training (IVT) and/or continuous vocational training (CVT), depending on the relevant individual characteristics of each Member State 's VET system and the type of VET providers.

They are to be used on a purely voluntary basis, taking account of their potential added value and in accordance with national legislation and practice. They should be considered neither as benchmarks, nor as a means of reporting on, or drawing comparisons between, the quality and efficiency of different national systems. The responsibility for monitoring the quality of these systems remains entirely with the Member States.

Annex 1: some amendments were made to this Annex on quality criteria and descriptive indicators.

Annex 2: the title is changed to a reference set of selected quality indicators for assessing quality in VET. The introduction notes that in terms of their nature and purpose, they should be distinguished from the indicators and benchmarks referred to in the Council conclusions of 25 May 2007 on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Furthermore, the table of indicators does not include aggregated indicators at national level in cases where these do not exist or are difficult to obtain. The aggregation of such indicators at national level can be carried out at a later stage on the basis of a joint agreement between the Member States, the Commission and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network. Parliament made some amendments to Annex 2.

Lastly, it should be noted that this proposal is closely linked to the proposal on the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). (Please see [COD/2008/0070](#)).

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

PURPOSE: to establish a "European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training".

PROPOSED ACT: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training.

CONTENT: following a first reading agreement with the European Parliament, the Council adopted a Recommendation on a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training. This recommendation establishes a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework as a reference instrument to help Member States to promote and monitor continuous improvement of their VET systems based on common European references, which builds on and further develops the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF).

The framework could help Member States to further improve and develop their VET systems, support lifelong learning strategies, further European labour market integration and the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework ([EQF](#)) and promote a culture of quality improvement at all levels, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems.

This recommendation should contribute to modernising education and training systems, improving the effectiveness of training by seeking to ensure that people do not leave without qualifications, improving the interrelationship of education, training and employment, building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning and expanding the awarding of qualifications on the basis of experience acquired. This recommendation also provides for a framework for the identification, support and exchange of best practices not only at national but also at local and regional levels in all relevant networks, including the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework network.

The European Parliament and the Council recommend that Member States:

- Recommendation 1: use and further develop the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, quality criteria, indicative descriptors and reference indicators to further improve and develop their vocational education and training (VET) systems, support lifelong learning strategies and the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and of the European Quality Charter for Mobility;
- Recommendation 2: devise, not later than 18 June 2011, an approach aimed at improving quality assurance systems at national level and making best use of the framework, involving all relevant stakeholders;
- Recommendation 3: participate actively in the framework network as a basis for further development of common principles, reference criteria and indicators, guidelines and tools for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local levels;
- Recommendation 4: establish a Quality Assurance National Reference Point for VET that is linked to the particular structures and requirements of each Member State and that brings together all stakeholders concerned, in order to ensure the follow-up of initiatives. The reference points should: (i) keep a wide range of stakeholders informed about the activities of the framework network; (ii) provide active support for the implementation of the work programme; (iii) take concrete initiatives to promote further development of the framework; (iv) support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance; (v) ensure that information is disseminated to stakeholders effectively;
- Recommendation 5: undertake a review of the implementation process every four years on the basis of reference criteria.

Moreover, the Parliament and the Council endorse the Commission's intention to:

- Intention 1: support Member States in carrying out the above tasks, in particular by facilitating cooperation and mutual learning, testing and developing guidance material, and providing information on quality developments in VET across Member States;
- Intention 2: promote and participate together with the Member States in the framework network, contributing to policy development in this area through concrete proposals and initiatives;
- Intention 3: ensure follow-up to the implementation of this recommendation by presenting a report every four years on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a review of this recommendation conducted in cooperation with the Member States and involving the various stakeholders; undertake, on the basis of that report and in cooperation with the Member States, an evaluation of the implementation of this recommendation and, if necessary, its revision.

Non-binding use: use of the Framework will be voluntary. Its main users will be public authorities and the bodies charged with quality assurance and improvement.

Annexes: the Framework comprises 2 Annexes: a quality assurance and improvement cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment and review of VET, supported by common quality criteria (annex 1 to the proposal), indicative descriptors and indicators (annex 2 to the proposal). The set of indicators will be further developed through European cooperation on a bilateral and/or multilateral basis, building on European data and national registers.

Lastly, it should be noted that this Recommendation is closely linked to the proposal on the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) (please see [COD/2008/0070](#)).

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 18/06/2009.

European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

The Commission presents a report on the implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for vocational education and training (EQ VET).

General framework of EQAVET and objectives of the report: the report recalls that vocational education and training (VET), has a crucial role to play in fostering growth.

However, the challenges are still significant:

- increasing VETs attractiveness,
- embedding stronger work based learning,
- enhancing labour market relevance,
- developing stronger career and education guidance,
- implementing teachers and trainers professional development, and
- improving recognition and transparency of VET learning outcomes between countries and across different education pathways.

Quality assurance (QA) has an important role in addressing these challenges, in particular through overcoming skills mismatches and improving employability of young people so that a shared understanding of VET excellence can finally emerge, facilitating mutual recognition of learning acquired in various countries and thus enabling more mobility and a better response to economic and societal challenges.

This paper is the first report on progress of quality assurance in VET in the European Union, following the adoption of the Recommendation of

the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET). It summarises the experience gained and presents the Commission proposals for the way ahead.

What is EQ VET? the EQAVET recommendation establishes a reference instrument to help Member States to promote and monitor continuous improvement of VET systems. The framework should contribute to quality improvement in VET and to increased transparency of, and consistency in, VET policy developments between Member States, thereby promoting mutual trust, mobility of workers and learners, and lifelong learning.

The framework comprises a cycle of four phases (planning, implementation, evaluation and review). It should be regarded as a "toolbox", from which the various users may choose those elements that they consider most relevant to their specific systems. The indicators proposed for measuring VET quality improvement concern data such as investment in training of teachers and trainers, participation, completion and placement rate in VET programmes, utilisation of acquired skills at work place, unemployment rate, prevalence of vulnerable groups, mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market and schemes used to promote access to VET.

Evaluation conclusions: in general, the report indicates that EQAVET has contributed to advancing a quality culture in VET in European countries, as well as to its practical implementation, through the development notably of quality operational measures within the EQAVET network.

However, such measures have focused on institutional, school-based provision (most of initial VET and part of continuing VET), with less visible impact on work-based learning and non-formal provision (which makes up most of continuing VET but could also play a key part in Initial VET in dual systems).

The flexible approach of EQAVET, making available tools for selection and adjustment, has facilitated its use, but at the same time has reduced its potential as a common language and conceptual framework across countries.

The report considers that a clear need emerges therefore for enhanced cooperation with other European instruments for quality assurance and transparency.

Accordingly, the following measures are proposed:

- give explicit attention to the quality assurance of qualification design and award, liaising to [the EQF](#), and the [Europass Certificate Supplement](#) ;
- improve implementation in Member States by:
 - developing descriptors, indicators and related guidelines to better address the quality and the appropriate proficiency level of outcomes acquired by learners in VET;
 - developing and test guidelines in cooperation with diverse stakeholders and coordination with developments related with quality in adult learning;
 - test the opportunity for European arrangements to make national quality assurance measures more transparent across countries. This could include developing an information supplement to facilitate common understanding of national accreditation processes of VET providers, promoting common guidelines on how to describe quality assurance procedures compatible with EQAVET.

The report also looks at possible measures in the framework of Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020.

Lastly, the Commission stresses the need to undertake actions towards better European cooperation in [quality assurance](#), by examining how the objectives of EQAVET could be pursued through a comprehensive approach to quality assurance for lifelong learning.