Creation of a European qualifications framework

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Thomas MANN (EPP-ED, DE) on the creation of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It welcomed the Commission's initiative on modernising, improving and reinforcing European education and training systems with a view to laying down a common reference framework for European certification systems. MEPs pointed out, however, that the EQF must serve primarily to classify certification procedures based on the outcome of vocational training and they called for "simple, workable descriptors" to be used and the number of levels reduced. They added that the competences set out in the descriptors should include knowledge not only of social and ethical issues but also of cultural issues. The EQF should also be more closely linked to the labour market and greater emphasis should be placed on improving the ability of the individual to find employment and achieving greater security for workers at the workplace.

The report said that particular attention should be paid to methods and systems of evaluating learning outcomes achieved by non-formal or informal methods, as the development of skills in the context of lifelong learning takes place in a wide range of everyday work situations. Every country should have its own national or regional qualifications framework ensuring compatibility with the EQF. MEPs stressed that the implementation of the EFQ on a voluntary basis required the support and commitment of national and sectoral stakeholders and that increased cooperation between the Member States in the context of the EFQ should result in mutual trust, thereby making a significant contribution to mobility in the European labour market. The Commission was urged to develop and propose appropriate methods and strategies for the efficient functioning of the EFQ for an appropriate trial period, an impact assessment and a supporting evaluation. Lastly, the report pointed to the importance of a wide and well-structured communication and dissemination strategy to raise awareness of the EFQ and generate interest in its benefits.