***EU-CERT:  
European Certificates and Accreditation for European Projects***

**PR1 Research Report***March 2022*

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# **Research Report**

Several research activities are part of the EU-CERT project in order to find out about certificate and quality assurance structures in the partner countries. As a starting point, a preliminary study was already carried out before the project began, which clearly showed that there was a need for a European certification programme . Three further research initiatives were then carried out in the project so that certification criteria for the tool could be found. At first, the partners needed to undertake a desktop research for country specific results, which is part of the qualitative research. Then the partners needed to carry out a qualitative research, in which they combined the results of the desktop research with expert interviews in their country. And finally, they needed to accomplish a quantitative research with the help of a questionnaire survey. The following report will show the most important results of the three research parts of the EU-CERT project.

## **Desktop Research Results**

The first step in the project was to find out about existing certificate and quality assurance structures through a desktop research in the partner countries.

### **Desktop Research Results in Germany**

Several certificate structures have been found through desktop research. There is a central body called DAkkS in Germany, which is described in more detail than the others.

#### DAkkS

The main certification body is the DAkkS (German Accreditation Body) in Germany. “The DAkkS is the national accreditation authority of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is a central building block of the quality infrastructure and issues accreditations in the field of conformity assessment. The DAkkS acts in the legal mandate and in the interest of the state, the economy and the protection of society and the environment.” (DAkkS, 2023a). Therefore, DAkkS itself accredits organisations that want to certify other programmes. They operate as a state body on the basis of national and European rights (DAkkS, 2023b). The DAkkS accreditation process goes through the following six steps.

1. Basics of accreditation (DAkkS, 2023c)

Once an organisation asks for an accreditation, an area of the organisation is selected to be examined in detail and then evaluated.

If this area meets all requirements, it can be positively assessed and receives either a temporary or permanent accreditation.

2. Application for accreditation (DAkkS, 2023d)

Depending on needs, there are four different types of application: application for initial accreditation, re-accreditation, amendment, (partial) suspension/(partial) revocation.

Each application requires certain documents to be completed and sent. These are then recorded and formally checked by the DAkkS Application Service. Once all the necessary documents have been completed, they are forwarded to the relevant department.

3. Review phase (DAkkS, 2023e)

The department then prepares the main event, the review of the area. For this purpose, they plan the assessment team, the duration of the on-site assessment, the required random samples, the type and scope of witness activities and, if necessary, other framework conditions. All this depends on the size and scope of the accreditation applied for.

Then the plan is implemented and the area of the organisation is assessed. The requirements depend on the type of area. In a follow-up, the results are ascertained and any corrective measures are determined in order to enable a renewed assessment and finally to achieve accreditation.

4. Decision (DAkkS, 2023f)

Afterwards, a decision is made as to whether the area fulfils all the requirements of the DAkkS in order to be accredited. This decision is made by an independent body, the Accreditation Committee (AkA).

The organisation then receives a written decision on whether it has passed or failed the assessment. In case it passes, they directly receive the accreditation certificate.

5. Monitoring phase (DAkkS, 2023g)

In the monitoring phase, it is regularly checked whether the competence confirmed in the accreditation decision continues to exist. These monitoring activities are carried out in the same way as step 3, by assessing the selected area against certain criteria.

As long as the assessment remains positive during the monitoring, the accreditation also remains valid. As soon as criteria are no longer met, a decision will be made on a restriction, suspension or cancellation of accreditation.

For permanent accreditations, the cycle always starts again with step 3. For temporary accreditations, the cycle always starts again with step 2 and means reaccreditation. If the assessment results or other information indicate that a body is no longer competent or has seriously violated its duty, the DAkkS may also restrict, suspend or withdraw a granted accreditation.

6. Change of accreditation (DAkkS, 2023h)

For various reasons, the organisation may request a change of accreditation. Such reasons can be, for example, change/expansion/reduction of the area, additional locations or change of address. Then the accreditation cycle starts with step 2.

It became apparent that the DAkkS plays an essential role in certification and quality assurance in Germany. Their accreditation process goes through six steps and takes several months. Through the seal, it can be assumed that areas of an organisation meet certain national and European standards.

#### Certification in accordance with SGB III in conjunction with AZAV

Certification of continuing vocational education and training (CVET) measures can take place on the basis of SGB III (German Social Security Code) in conjunction with AZAV (Accreditation and Licensing Ordinance on Employment Promotion) and the recommendations of the AZAV Advisory Board. In the area of the AZAV, the DAkkS has the task of accrediting certification bodies - so-called qualified bodies (FKS) (DAkkS, 2023i). This enables the certification bodies to approve providers and measures of employment promotion. Both the provider and the CVET measure can be certified by a DAkkS-accredited certification body in accordance with SGB III in conjunction with AZAV and the recommendations of the AZAV Advisory Board. Training providers can receive funding from the Federal Employment Agency (BA) for training programmes for individuals. Prerequisites for this are approval as a provider (see § 178 SGB III) and/or a measure approval (see § 179 SGB III) for the individual measures. Both accreditations are offered by the DAkkS-accredited qualified bodies (FKS) (DAkkS. 2023i).

The requirements that providers of CVET measures must fulfil in order to be certified by a competent body are regulated by §178 SGB III in conjunction with §2 AZAV and the recommendations of the AZAV Advisory Board (2021, p. 6ff.). There are the following eight requirements which need to be fulfilled by providers of CVET in order to be certified. Only the requirement areas are mentioned here, there is more information in the respective legal texts.

1. Capacity and reliability (cf. §178 No. 1 SGB III)  
2. Support for vocational integration (cf. §178 No. 2 SGB III)  
3. Qualification of the staff (cf. §178 No. 3 SGB III)  
4. Application of a QM system (cf. §178 no. 4 SGB III)  
5. Contractual agreements (cf. §178 No. 5 SGB III)  
6. Measures design (cf. §§ 179, 180 SGB III, §§ 3, 4 AZAV, AZAV Advisory Board)  
7. Equipment (cf. §§ 179, 180 SGB III, §§ 3, 4 AZAV, AZAV Advisory Board)  
8. Principles of economic efficiency and economy (cf. §§ 179, 180 SGB III, §§ 3, 4 AZAV, AZAV Advisory Board)

The process of provider approval according to SGB III in conjunction with AZAV and the recommendations of the AZAV Advisory Council includes the following steps:

* Application for approval / New application
* Submission of quality management documents and evidence
* Documentation check
* On-site audit / Accreditation audit
* Audit report
* Review of the audit report
* Certification award
* Monitoring audit / Repeat audit

The process of approval of measures according to SGB III in conjunction with AZAV includes the following steps:

* Application for approval of measures
* Submission of measure list
* Determination of reference selection
* Application review and submission of necessary documents
* Document check
* Checking the costs of the measures
* Issue of certificate

#### Certification according to DIN ISO standard 29993

The international standard DIN ISO 29993 is entitled Learning services beyond formal education - Service requirements and describes minimum requirements for learning services outside formal education. It is primarily aimed at learning service providers from the education and training segment and includes all learning services that promote lifelong learning. The key requirements of DIN ISO 29993 include:

1. General information  
2. Information before using the learning service  
3. Learning needs analysis  
4. Development of learning services  
5. Information for registered learners and their sponsors  
6. Competence of learning service providers  
7. Learning material  
8. Learning environment  
9. Learning design  
10. Assessment of learning outcomes  
11. Monitoring and evaluation  
12. Management of learning services  
13. Accounting

The process of DIN ISO standard 29993 includes the following steps:

* Offer phase and contract phase
* Audit preparation
* Certification audit / On-site audit
* Certificate award
* Monitoring audits
* Re-certification

#### Certification according to DIN ISO standard 21001

The international standard DIN ISO 21001 is entitled Educational organisations - Management systems for educational organisations - Requirements with guidance for use. DIN ISO 21001 is a standard that provides guidelines for educational organizations on how to establish, implement, maintain, and improve an educational management system. The standard is based on the quality management principles of ISO 9001 and focuses specifically on the educational context. By meeting the requirements, educational organizations can achieve their educational objectives, improve the satisfaction of learners and stakeholders, and enhance their reputation in the educational community. The requirements of DIN ISO 21001 include:

1. Scope and context of the organisation  
2. Leadership  
3. Planning  
4. Support  
5. Operation  
6. Performance evaluation  
7. Improvement

The process of DIN ISO standard 21001 includes the following steps:

* Offer phase and contract phase
* Audit preparation
* Audit level 1
* Audit level 2
* Certificate award
* Monitoring audits
* Re-certification

#### LQW Model of ArtSet Forschung Bildung Beratung GmbH

LQW stands for Learner-oriented quality testing in education, training and continuing education and is a quality management system developed by ArtSet Forschung Bildung Beratung GmbH. The LQW model is a recognised and freely accessible quality management system which places the learner at the centre of quality development and testing procedures, can be used by any educational organisation in the field of adults, further education and training, provides for external testing and serves the comparability of educational organisations. The core idea of the model is to support organisations in becoming a learning education organisation through the implementation of a continuous quality cycle and strategic development goals. This model provides the following eleven requirements:

1. Mission statement  
2. Demand development  
3. Key processes  
4. Teaching-learning process  
5. Evaluation of the educational processes  
6. Infrastructure  
7. Leadership  
8. Personnel  
9. Controlling  
10. Customer communication  
11. Strategic development goals

The process of LQW Model is called “Quality cycle of a learning organisation” and includes the following steps:

* Introductory workshop
* Internal evaluation
* Action planning and implementation
* Documentation in the self-report
* External evaluation
* Visitation and final workshop

#### "Sector Model Continuing Education" of the Gütesiegelverbund Weiterbildung e. V. (Quality Seal Association for Continuing Education)

The "Sector Model for Continuing Education" has "emerged from the practice of continuing education with scientific support for the practice of continuing education. It is dialogue- and development-oriented and takes on board suggestions from practitioners of continuing education, education experts, public education-related institutions and participants" (Gütesiegelverbund Weiterbildung e. V., 2015, p. 3). The model is designed in such a way that it can be used in many different educational areas, such as general, political and vocational education. The aim of the quality management model is to "systematically ensure and further develop the quality of education/further education" (Gütesiegelverbund Weiterbildung e. V., 2015, p. 2) and thus contribute to ensuring that education and educational offers are of high quality. It is intended to help (further) education institutions to question their structures and processes as well as their pedagogical actions and to check whether these support the educational process. This model provides the following four requirements:

1. Education and educational offer  
2. Staff and professionalisation: Part 1 - full-time staff and Part 2 - part-time pedagogical staff  
3. Participants, participant protection  
4. Organisation, responsibility and development

The process of Sector Model Continuing Education includes the following steps:

* Registration and conclusion of contract
* Initial interview, agreement on a timetable
* Submission of the self-report and the documents considered as evidence
* Document review, interim report
* Facility visit
* Audit report, submission to the advisory board
* Decision of the advisory board on the award of the certificate
* Validity of the certificate 3 years

### **Desktop Research Results in Croatia**

*Croatian Quality Framework*

In Croatia, the Ministry of Science and Education devises plans and policies for the CROQF (Croatian Quality Framework) which matches the EQF (European Qualifications Framework). Additionally, this ministry maybe assisted by other Croatian agencies such as Ministry of Labour and Skills in the development of CROQF to build and make Croatia as competitive as possible within Europe and globally as far as education is concerned.

The Croatian education system has evolved over the last decade and since joining the EU on 1 July 2013 the country has made several leaps forward in order to match the EU framework and accomplish higher standards in education and therefore, higher productivity.

*European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET)*

With the recommendations by the European Commission in 2004 of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET), the Agency for VET in Croatia has been developing and implementing VET quality and standards since 2010. The activities of ASOO are further enshrined in law under the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education Act (Art. 4, para. 2), the Vocational Education Act (Art. 13) and the Adult Education Act (Art. 23). These laws include participation in evaluation, self-assessment and external evaluation procedures within the system of vocational education and training and adult education.

The first article of the Adult Education Act defines adult education in Croatia as a process of learning of adults aimed to exercise the right to free personality development, training in order to increase own employability (acquisition of qualifications for the initial profession, retraining, acquisition and deepening of professional knowledge, skills and abilities) and active citizenship education. In Croatia, adult education relates to all forms of education for persons older than 15 years. The Act stipulates that adult education is based on following principles: lifelong learning; rational use of educational opportunities, territorial proximity and universal access to education under equal conditions and in accordance with the abilities; freedom and autonomy in choosing the manner of content, form, means and methods; respect for diversity and inclusion; professional and ethical responsibilities of andragogic workers; guarantees of the quality of the educational offer and respect for the personality and dignity of each participant.

*Agency for Vocational Education and Training (ASOO)*

ASOO participates in the work of EQAVET and is the reference point in Croatia for quality standards and maintaining VET quality across Croatia. It has also carried out the following as part of the implementation of the self-assessment process (asoo, 2022):

* continuous advisory support to schools in the implementation of the self-assessment process
* professional training for school Quality committees
* monitoring the implementation of the self-assessment process – Self-assessment reports
* visits to schools and Quality committees for support
* reporting on the self-assessment process

According to ASOO and Ministry of Science, Education & Sports in Croatia schools within the VET sector independently and with full responsibility assess the quality of their own work. This self-assessment includes the following priority areas: work planning, teaching and learning support, student achievement and learning outcomes, material conditions, human resources and professional development of employees, cooperation within the vocational education institution and cooperation with other stakeholders as well as institution promotion and management and the wider governmental agencies implementing VET quality and standards. Each priority area is further divided into several quality areas that are described by quality criteria. According to the quality criteria, schools assess the level of their success in the implementation of the educational process and plan to improve their work. ASOO and other governmental agencies are there to help improve standards within the institutions and across the whole country.

Each VET institution has access to the online self-assessment tools via ASOO and its website (e-kvaliteta.asoo.hr). Over a 100 pages self-assessment manual is also available via the ASOO website. In addition to self-assessment, VET institutions are required to be externally evaluated as per the Primary and Secondary School Education Act and the Vocational Education and Training Act Chapter VIII Article 88.

The above Act states that in order to improve the quality of educational activities, external evaluation and self-assessment is carried out in school institutions, and it refers to conducting national exams and measuring the level of quality of all components of the national curriculum. It is also stated that external evaluation is conducted by the National Center for External Evaluation of Education and that schools are required to use the results of national exams and all other indicators of educational performance for analysis and self-assessment, to permanently improve the quality of school work. The manner of conducting external evaluation and using the results of evaluation of school institutions shall be prescribed by the Minister. (asoo, 2022)

The Vocational Education and Training Act, Art. 9., states that the system of quality assurance of vocational education is established at the level of vocational education providers and at the level of qualifications. It is also defined that the quality assurance system is based on self-assessment and external evaluation procedures. Self-assessment and external evaluation procedures are carried out in individual vocational education institutions, including direct insight into the work of vocational education institutions and on the basis of national or special exams. The results of self-assessment and external evaluation of vocational education institutions must be used to improve the quality of work and achieve better results. The methodology of external evaluation of vocational education institutions is adopted by the National Center for External Evaluation of Education in cooperation with the Agency.

Croatian Strategy of Education, Science and Technology foresees further development of the quality assurance system and the process of external and internal evaluation. From the Strategy: “Various forms of external evaluation of students’ educational achievements are carried out at the national level (national exams and State Matura exams), and certain models of school self-assessment have been tested. It is estimated, however, that these procedures are also insufficiently interconnected and are not used sufficiently to improve school practices.”

At VET institutional level, a number of them were affected during the major earthquake that took place in Croatia, especially in Zagreb on 22 march 2020. This, unfortunately left some VET institutions unable to deliver programmes as they intended as many were destroyed or affected from the shock of the earthquake which were already in a dilapidated state.

### **Desktop Research Results in France**

In France, vocational diplomas are a national standard. They are categorized by level, from level V (first level of qualification) to level I, corresponding to the highest qualifications. They can be obtained in one of three ways:

1. Initial vocational education: it follows on from general education and prepares young people for qualified employment as anything from a blue-collar worker to an engineer.
2. Continuous vocational training: this is aimed at all categories of active adults, employees, job seekers, civil servants, freelance workers, entrepreneurs. It allows them to build on or gain a recognized standard of qualification.
3. Accreditation of Life Experience (Validation des acquis de l’expérience or VAE): this allows vocational qualifications to be gained through the recognition of skills and learning obtained through paid or unpaid work.

These different paths make it possible to meet the needs of different people seeking qualifications, regardless of their age, educational standards or experience. They make real life-long learning a possibility.

Since 1971, adult training has been a right recognized by French law. Its objective is to develop the professional integration or reintegration of adults, to maintain them in employment, to encourage the development of their skills, to enable workers to adapt to changing techniques and working conditions, to promote their social advancement through access to the various levels of culture and professional qualification and their contribution to cultural, economic and social development.

#### The national register of vocational qualifications (Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles or RNCP)

Since 2002, all vocational qualifications recognized by the State and the social partners, at national level, have been registered in the national register of vocational qualifications. As a single reference source, the RNCP is a centralized repository of competences providing individuals and companies with up-to-date data on vocational qualifications. It includes public and private qualifications, based on initial and continuing vocational training, provided that they are vocational in nature. This means that the RNCP does not include general qualifications such as the national brevet qualification, general qualifications (baccalaureates or doctorates).

Three main categories of vocational qualifications are listed in the register:

1. vocational qualifications (certifications and diplomas) awarded on behalf of the State by ministries on behalf of the State, developed by ministries with the support of vocational advisory committees (CNCP). These qualifications are legally registered in the RNCP;
2. sector-specific certificates of professional qualification (certificats de qualification professionnelle or CQP), developed by and under the responsibility of the social partners. These qualifications are not automatically registered in the national register of vocational qualifications. The professional body concerned must make a request (by filing an application form), which is subject to CNCP approval;
3. other vocational qualifications, described as ‘qualifications voluntarily registered with the RNCP’, produced by training organizations, professional bodies and ministers without CNCP backing. It should be noted that private training organizations have no obligation to register their professional qualifications in the RNCP, provided that they do not use terms in the description such as ‘licence’, ‘master’ or ‘diplôme d’ État’.

#### Certificat d’aptitude professionnelle (CAP), Vocational Training Certificate

The Certificat d’aptitude professionnelle or Vocational Training Certificate is the oldest vocational diploma, created in 1911. It certifies an initial level of qualification; it awards its holder with a skilled worker or employee qualification. Aimed at the acquisition of practical knowledge, it allows immediate entry into the workplace. The CAP covers over 200 specializations for artisanal trades, production, and services. A part of initial vocational education, it is taken over two years after the last year of collège (lower secondary). The ultimate aim is entry into the workplace. But it also makes it possible to obtain the Baccalauréat professionnel after a period of further study.

#### Baccalauréat professionnel (Vocational Baccalaureate)

It certifies the aptitude of the holder to exercise a highly qualified professional activity. The Baccalauréat professionnel offers 70 specializations in very diverse sectors (commerce, services, catering, maintenance, secretariat, accounting, construction, agriculture...) as well as very particular sectors (watch making, jewelry, fashion...). In initial vocational training, this diploma is taken over three years after the last class of collège or over two years after the CAP. The ultimate aim is entry into the workplace. But, like any French baccalaureate in France, it gives the right to access higher education.

#### Validation des acquis de l’expérience (VAE), Accreditation of life experience

A recognition of prior vocational learning scheme was put in place in France as early as 1992. In 2002, this scheme was built on and turned into the Validation des acquis de l’expérience. Like traditional initial training, apprenticeships and continuous training, the VAE gives access to diplomas. The VAE scheme makes it possible to gain all or part of a vocational diploma through the recognition of skills and knowledge obtained through professional experience. This experience must be of at least three years and related to the diploma sought. It can come from salaried employment, non-salaried employment (shop keeper, shop keeper’s assistant, freelance work, farming, artisanal work...) and/or volunteer work (union, charity). Diplomas and certifications that are recorded in the National Register of Vocational Certification are accessible through VAE. Any individual, whatever their age, nationality, status or standard of education, can work towards a VAE and can, among other things, benefit from support. It is an individual right. The recognition of prior learning procedure is based on an application and possibly interview by a panel for the relevant diploma, who will then decide whether to award all or part of the chosen diploma. Hence, those who were not able to follow the academic approach to working towards a diploma can access official certification of their achievements which holds real currency in the labor market.

#### Key Providers

Adult and continuing education in its two-fold French differentiation into lifelong learning (la formation tout au long de la vie) and further and continuing education (formation professionnelle continue) is delivered in a wide range of institutional arrangements. The responsibility is shared by all the economic and social partners involved (each of which can act independently). In this respect, the state does not have the same predominant position as it has in initial training.

The best opportunities for adult education are provided by the private non-profit sector, which operates with public resources. However, government and public authorities also offer a wide range of possibilities for adults. Reasons for taking up such education is extremely diversified including, training for a new job in case of unemployment, lifelong learning, social promotion, or illiteracy. This is the reason why government, regions, and private associations work to provide a wide range of courses and opportunities for adult people.

The main non-formal learning providers are the Universités Populaires (Folk Universities), which are coordinated by the French Association of Folk Universities. Furthermore, innumerable federated organizations and association directly contribute to the implementation of non-formal adult education in France, commonly known as "éducation populaire". A decisive role is also played by many local non-federated organizations, which provide literacy, adult training courses, and social and education activities. On the other hand, vocational institutions are mostly public or organized by public powers, through the GRETA mechanism, or the VAE system. Moreover, some schools can be recognized as Lycées des Métiers, special high schools providing (generally evening) courses for adults and the Écoles de la Deuxième Chance - E2C (Second Chance Schools).

As far as learners are concerned, continuing training can be undertaken by all adults over 18 years of age; admission procedures depend on the status of each learner: employees, jobseekers or people with special needs. According to Eurostat (Labor force survey data), the participation rate of 25-64 year olds in continuing education in France in 2019 was 19.5%.

#### Quality and Evaluation

The main bodies responsible for the evaluation of continuing education in France are

* The Ministry of National Education, through the design and award of the EDUFORM quality label to public or private vocational training structures (Greta, GIP FCIP, CFA, etc.)
* The General Inspectorate of Education, Sport and Research (IGÉSR), through the performance of missions to evaluate in-service teacher training schemes

In France, the evaluation of continuing education is based mainly on external evaluation procedures. A significant example is the award of the EDUFORM label. This label aims to guarantee the quality of the services offered and implemented within the national education vocational training network throughout the country. It is also open to all vocational training providers, whether public or private, which prepare for national education vocational diplomas.

This is a quality label for vocational training from the Ministry of National Education and Youth. It is issued for three years by the Minister of National Education and Youth, after a national labelling audit and the opinion of the national labelling commission. Obtaining the label automatically leads to the award of the QUALIOPI quality certification.

France Compétences is the only body responsible for the quality and governance of vocational training and apprenticeship. It evaluates the actions carried out by skills operators, the evolution of costs and the quality of training. All training organizations, including apprenticeship training centers, have to be quality certified, as long as the training they offer is financed by public funds and mutual funds. The objective is to strengthen and enhance the quality of the training offered; clarify the offer of ‘quality’ certification for training providers and bring more flexibility in the individual approaches of workers to training.

Another element that guarantees quality is the methodology for developing certification processes. For example, each ministry that develops standards for professional diplomas in consultation with professional circles, defines examination regulations, awards diplomas, offers various types of training in its institutions, recruits, trains and pays teachers, monitors the quality of training and reports on the results and resources used. The need for the training organization to be accredited or recognized by the awarding authority responsible for the diplomas or titles prepared was analyzed as an important element of quality.

### **Desktop Research Results in Cyprus**

#### Higher Education System in Cyprus

1. State university (ies): University of Cyprus is exempt from the accreditation process, A Technical University and an Open University were also established in recent years and accreditation systems were applied

2. State extra-university tertiary education institutions: None of the public tertiary education institutions are required to be accredited; Higher Technical Institute, School of Nursing, Higher Hotel Institute, Forestry College, Mediterranean Institute of Management

3. Private extra-university tertiary education institutions: are registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture, and they also go through an accreditation process overseen by the Republic of Cyprus's government, the Ministry of Education and Culture is currently developing criteria for the transformation of selected private tertiary education institutions into private universities, based on what has been found thus far, it's clear that accreditation in Cyprus only applies to private tertiary education institutions

The State University and The State Tertiary Education institutions are not required to be accredited, and no such accreditation process is available for these institutions. Apparently, it is assumed that the state status of these institutions automatically indicates the presence of the expected quality, as well as automatic recognition, without the need for an independent external evaluation process. This practice is clearly dubious and contentious.

This practice is carried out by a group of faculty members and academic administrators from other peer institutions; their goal is to determine the quality of the institution under evaluation, or of one or more educational programs, depending on whether accreditation is institutional or educational program-based. This is primarily accomplished by investigating a wide range of educational process inputs and outputs, as well as the educational activities involved in the teaching/learning process. The institution under evaluation undertakes a significant portion of this evaluation through a self-evaluation process, which is presented in the form of a Self-Study document. The Self-Study document is actually treated as the primary source of information and data by the accreditation evaluators in relation to the already established accreditation standards and criteria. The accreditation process is carried out without suspicion or the intent to punish an institution. On the contrary, the accreditation process is viewed as an exercise in which an institution, particularly those tasked with preparing the Self-Study document, identifies strengths and weaknesses and suggests ways to remedy the weaknesses and improve further. It is important to note that accreditation is not a process for categorising educational institutions or programs as excellent, average, or poor.

#### Cyprus Accreditation System

This accreditation system is designed to accredit educational programs rather than institutions, though as we will see later, the accreditation standards, criteria, and regulations are the same as those used for institutional accreditation. As a result, both accredited and non-accredited registered educational programs can be found at a registered institution of tertiary education.

#### Accreditation Process

The Accreditation Council is the body responsible for implementing the accreditation process and making the final decision on accreditation of an educational program at a private tertiary education institution. The Accreditation Council is appointed for a 5-year term by the Council of Ministers on the recommendation of the Minister of Education and Culture, and members of the Council may be re-appointed for another 5-year term. The Accreditation Council appoints the accreditation Visiting Teams, reviews their final recommendations, and decides whether to accredit, deny accreditation, or postpone the decision on accreditation of an educational program for a specified period of time to allow the institution to improve in a number of specified areas.

The Certification Procedure that very private tertiary education institution is registered with the Ministry of Education is eligible to apply for accreditation of a registered education program, provided that there is a complete curriculum for the entire program and that there are students at least in the first year of study in the program at the time of the initial application. The institution bears all costs associated with completing the accreditation process.

1. First Application: The initial application includes details such as the program's objectives, curriculum, and course content, degrees to which the program leads, and so on, and is submitted to the Director General of the Ministry of Education.

2. "Self-Study": After the initial application has been approved, the accreditation candidate for the specific education program institution prepares a Self-Study with the participation of its entire teaching and administrative personnel. The Self-Study follows the accreditation standards and criteria, which are divided into six major categories: Institutional Goals and Mission, Academic Programs, Teaching Personnel, Supporting Services, Buildings, and Facilities, Organization and Administration, Financial Resources. Furthermore, the Self-Study is expected to identify strengths and weaknesses in these areas, as well as to propose corrective measures in the case of weaknesses.

3. On-site Visit: Final Report by the Visiting Team, after the involved institution submits the Self-Study, the Director General of the Ministry of Education and Culture submits the initial application and the Self-Study to the Chairperson of the Accreditation Council, and the Accreditation Council appoints a Visiting Team for the on-site visit.

Members of the Visiting Team are faculty and administration from Cyprus's state universities and tertiary institutions, as well as from accredited higher education institutions abroad. During the on-site visit, the Visiting Team reviews the Self-Study and other involved documents made available at the institution, as well as meets with faculty and administration members, students, and other institutional constituencies. After the on-site visit, the Visiting Team creates a report that is sent to the institution for feedback. The Visiting Team then submits its final report to the Director General of the Ministry of Education and Culture, who forwards it to the Accreditation Council's Chairperson.

4. Decision of the Accreditation Council The Accreditation Council makes a decision, which is forwarded to the Minister of Education and Culture for confirmation and approval. The final decision can be either: (i). acceptance of the application for accreditation and accreditation of the educational program, or (ii). Rejection of the application for accreditation of the educational program, or (iii). decision postponement for a specified period of time, during which the institution will remedy minor weaknesses or deficiencies. The Accreditation Council then makes a positive or negative decision. Accreditation is granted for four years, after which re-accreditation is required using the same process as for accreditation. Re-accreditation is granted for a period of ten years. If the application is rejected, the involved institution may reapply for accreditation of the educational program after one year.

#### Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (CYQAA)

Program evaluation and accreditation in higher education are responsibilities of CYQAA. CYQAA ensures the quality of higher education in the Republic of Cyprus and supports the continuous improvement and enhancement of higher education institutions (HEIs) and their programs of study through procedures prescribed by legislation. CYQAA was established by law as an independent and autonomous authority in Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus's competent authorities, as well as professional licensing bodies, institutions, employers, and stakeholders, recognize it as the only national quality assurance agency for higher education. The law protects the Agency's autonomy and independence in its operations, such as external evaluation processes, methodologies, expert selection, and decision-making within its competencies. Higher education institutions, ministries, and stakeholders have no influence on CYQAA's decisions or evaluation results. The Agency is funded by the state budget, and the law allows institutions to pay fees to conduct evaluations.

According to the law, the agency has expanded its competencies, including the following:

* Evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions, departments, and programs.
* Quality assurance in higher education using European Standards.
* Cross-border forms of education offered by local institutions in member states or third countries are evaluated and accredited.
* Evaluation of the conditions for cross-border education from foreign institutions in Cyprus.
* Evaluation of higher education institutions' inter-institutional cooperation.
* The dissemination of information about quality assurance in higher education.
* CYQAA is responsible for ensuring the quality of higher education in Cyprus and assisting higher education institutions in their continuous development and improvement within the framework of the ESG through the procedures provided by relevant legislation.

CYQAA is the competent authority in charge of:

* Institutional assessment – accreditation
* Accreditation for Departmental Evaluation
* Accreditation for program evaluation
* Accreditation of joint program evaluations
* Evaluation entails the accreditation of cross-border education provided by local institutions in member countries or third-party countries.
* Evaluation of the conditions in Cyprus for the provision of cross-border education from foreign institutions

The Quality Assurance and Certification Agency for Higher Education accredited Post-Secondary Institutes of Vocational Education and Training (PSIVET) to public schools of higher vocational education and training in April 2017. The accreditation of PSIVET's higher education programs is regarded as an important development because it contributes significantly to the goal of further strengthening vocational education and training in Cyprus.

#### Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency for Education (CYAQAAE)

The DHTE (Department of Higher and Tertiary Education) of Cyprus's Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) places a premium on quality assurance in the higher education sector. The Cypriot government has established a quality assurance agency known as the "Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (CYAQAAE). The CYAQAAE is a competent agency in charge of ensuring the quality of higher education in Cyprus. This authority is in charge of both internal and external quality assurance mechanisms in Cyprus's higher education institutions. This agency is in charge of the accreditation and evaluation of public and private higher education institutions and universities.

#### Cyprus Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA)

The Cyprus Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) has created an integrated ICT system with the goal of significantly improving its operations and services by increasing efficiency and effectiveness while decreasing bureaucracy and operational/administrative costs. The new system includes several subsystems, including electronic archiving, an accounting system, a human resource system, an internal portal, and a digital platform known as 'Hermes' (E), which, when fully implemented, will cover all operational needs and services provided by the HRDA using modern information communication technologies (ICT). The system significantly improves the organization's use of new information technologies while also contributing to the promotion of ICT and digital skills among HRDA staff and partners. The 'Hermes' digital portal provides easy access to all HRDA schemes and systems, with simple, user-friendly procedures that guide the user through the registration process, application submission, processing, and progress monitoring, including subsidy payment. At this point, the 'Hermes' digital portal allows external users to register as an entity (physical person, legal entity, consortium, or government body) under the specific status of each user (employer, trainer of vocational training, vocational training facility, vocational training centre and centre for assessment of vocational qualifications).

#### National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Until recently, the implementation of frameworks and mechanisms for transparency of qualifications and systems for the recognition of competences and qualifications in Cyprus was relatively limited. Cyprus, on the other hand, is committed to implementing the necessary EU tools. A government priority is the creation of a NQF to promote the recognition of academic and vocational qualifications obtained in Cyprus. The Council of Ministers established a high-level national committee comprised of the Directors-General of the MoEC, the MLSI, and the HRDA to facilitate the process. The national committee formed a working group in February 2009 to study examples of good practices in other European countries before preparing an interim report on the state of development of a NQF in Cyprus. The report was completed in March 2012 and served as the foundation for additional consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties.

The CPC, an MLSI institution, has been designated as the Cyprus National Europass Centre (NEC), and is thus responsible for the coordination, management, and promotion of all activities related to Europass documents, as well as the provision of information about the documents and collaboration with other organizations in the field of mobility and qualification transparency.

The Cyprus NEC, in collaboration with the Cyprus Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes, encourages all organizations participating in mobility programs to issue the Europass mobility document, and 221 documents were issued in 2011. Around 80% of higher education institutes automatically issue the Europass diploma supplement to their graduates, with 3 903 Europass diploma supplements issued in 2011. Furthermore, the majority of 2011 technical school graduates and CPC accelerated training program graduates (1 431) received Europass certificate supplements. The Cyprus NEC hosted 66 workshops in 2011, with 773 participants. Participants in the workshops created their own Europass CVs and were advised on how to write a cover letter and perform well in an interview.

#### The Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance

The Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) is the competent independent authority in charge of safeguarding standards and assisting, through the procedures provided by relevant legislation and the principles underlying the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (CYQAA, 2015), in the continuous improvement and upgrading of higher education institutions and their programs of study in order to comply with the ESG and the European Higher Education Area. It also aims to promote quality culture in Cyprus's higher education institutions (CYQAA, 2015).

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus appointed the members of the Council of the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education on the basis of the "Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment (CYQAA, 2015) and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Law of 2015" in a decision dated 5 November 2015 (CYQAA, 2015).

The legislation establishes a framework for quality assurance in higher education in Cyprus, within which higher education institutions will be encouraged to improve quality and develop an internal quality culture (CYQAA, 2015).

The Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) is in charge of ensuring the quality of higher education in Cyprus (CYQAA, 2015), as well as supporting the continuous improvement and upgrading of higher education institutions (HEIs) and their programs of study through the procedures prescribed by relevant legislation (CYQAA, 2015).

According to the law, the agency has expanded its competencies, which include the following (CYQAA, 2015): CYQAA and HEIs in Cyprus share the Bologna Process vision for the creation of the European Higher Education Area and have recognized that by engaging in quality assurance and accreditation processes (CYQAA, 2015), particularly through external evaluation processes, they will be able to showcase the quality of education provided while also increasing transparency, contributing to confidence-building and better recognition of their program's academic qualifications (CYQAA, 2015).

It has become clear that accreditation benefits students, HEIs, employers, and society in general by ensuring that graduates have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are reflected in the external evaluation criteria (CYQAA, 2015). The agency's vision is to work with its stakeholders to establish Cyprus as a district center of high quality higher education, in accordance with the standards and guidelines established by the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) (CYQAA, 2015). Its vision prioritizes the development of a quality culture in higher education, which leads to self-regulatory policies based on shared values, common beliefs, high expectations, and commitments to quality among all higher education institutions (CYQAA, 2015). The Cyprus Agency intends to actively participate in the European Network of Quality Assurance (ENQA) think tanks (CYQAA, 2015), as well as to join the European Network of Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) (CYQAA, 2015).

The CYQAA strives to continuously promote values that support authority and trust (CYQAA, 2015):

* Independence and integrity: The CYQAA acts impartially and in accordance with Cyprus Law and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), implementing the ESG through common evaluation criteria and equitable procedures throughout Cyprus Higher Education (CYQAA, 2015).
* Transparency: The CYQAA defends and makes public its policies, guidelines, evaluation criteria, expert reports, and decisions (CYQAA, 2015).
* Collaboration and Trust: The CYQAA has established a series of regular meetings with HEI representatives to listen to their questions and concerns and to provide guidance for ESG compliance (CYQAA, 2015).
* Professionalism: The CYQAA aims to continuously build and develop the competence and skills of its staff, as well as to promote professional procedures and communication channels (CYQAA, 2015).

CYQAA is dedicated to ensuring that both the Agency and Cyprus's Higher Education Institutions (HEI) fully comply with European Standards and Guidelines, as well as to promoting competitive, high-quality higher education in the country (CYQAA, 2015). Long-term goals and achievements include promoting higher education in Cyprus as a high-quality competitive European-oriented higher education capable of attracting high-quality students from three continents (CYQAA, 2015). The mid-term goals and achievements refer to the promotion of a culture of systematic, qualitative, and trustworthy self-assessment, which can lead to the HEI's self-improvement. A thematic analysis of the evaluation reports is also included, as is the publication of findings and trends (CYQAA, 2015).

The following are the short-term objectives (CYQAA, 2015):

* Complete compliance with ESG based on review and ENQA recommendations.
* Re-evaluation of institutions, programs, and departments.
* Assessment of Medical Schools.
* Negotiation of the agency's legislative and regulatory changes with stakeholders.
* External evaluation and reporting forms and procedures are being reviewed.
* Thematic analysis entails publishing the resulting findings and trends.
* Values that promote quality assurance and self-improvement are promoted.

#### Structure of the Agency (CYQAA, 2015)

* Council
* Chair of the Council
* Internal and International Affairs
* External Evaluations Devision
* Administrative Officer A
* Education Officers
* Office Assistance

#### Complaints’ Policy (CYQAA, 2015)

Individuals or organizations with substantiated concerns about an accredited institution's/ compliance programs with the Agency's external evaluation criteria, as well as the ESG and/or WFME standards, may bring those to the attention of CYQAA (CYQAA, 2015).

Regarding external accreditation, the following procedures will be implemented (CYQAA, 2015):

* The CYQAA Council will decide whether a complaint is credible. A complaint will be considered only if it is credible, substantiated, and supported by relevant evidence, references, examples, and so on. Complaints may only be filed in relation to an accredited institution's/department's/compliance programme with the Agency's external evaluation criteria and/or the ESG and/or the WFME standards, or the integrity of the external evaluation process upon which CYQAA granted accreditation to the said institution/department/programme. Concerns about national legislation, European Union law, or other applicable rules should be directed to the appropriate courts or authorities.
* If the complaint is not substantiated, the CYQAA will take no action and will notify the complainant.
* If the complaint is substantiated, CYQAA will notify the higher education institution of the complaint and request clarifications or additional information.
* If the complaint is substantiated but pertains to a single instance and has no significant impact on the institution's/departments/compliance programs with the aforementioned standards, the CYQAA Council shall issue a formal warning to the institution. The warning has no bearing on the institution's/department's/accreditation program's status. On the entry of the institution/department/program on the Agency's website, a formal warning statement is published.
* If the complaint is substantiated and raises serious concerns that the accredited institution/department/programme no longer meets the criteria upon which accreditation was granted, the CYQAA Council shall conduct an audit to determine whether the Accreditation criteria are still being met, in accordance with article 17(3)(g) of the legislation.
* If the audit procedure substantiates the complaint and raises serious concerns that the accredited institution/department/program no longer meets the criteria for accreditation, the CYQAA Council may decide to or rescind the Accreditation decision and begin an external evaluation of the institution/department/program.

Before a final decision is made in scenarios (5) and (6), the higher education institution is invited to make representation. The final decision is then communicated to the institution and published.

#### Quality Policy Statement (CYQAA, 2015)

CYQAA aspires to establish Cyprus as a high-quality international center for higher education through collaboration with higher education institutions, local and European organizations, and the development of a quality culture. It protects every student's right to study in programs that meet European quality standards and promotes institutional synergies through its activities. It promotes new university education models based on transnational joint programs that increase academics' and students' experience and expertise in innovative approaches, research, teaching, and practical training.

The CYQAA formally affirms its commitment to quality, recognizing that high professional standards and integrity in the Agency's work are required, and that quality assurance in the performance of its activities is critical to the credibility of its actions and the trust of its stakeholders, which include higher education institutions, students, political authorities, and society at large. Furthermore, CYQAA formally commits to putting in place all necessary safeguards and mechanisms so that: All persons involved in its activities are competent and act professionally and ethically; they lead to continuous improvement within the agency; they enable the agency to guard against intolerance of any kind or discrimination; and they ensure appropriate communication with the relevant authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.

#### Fundamental elements of CYQAA's quality policy (CYQAA, 2015)

* A clear definition of its mission and objectives; compliance with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and relevant national legislation;
* Quality control over the evaluation of programs, departments, and institutions of higher learning;
* Transparency in all of its operations;
* Establishment of accountability mechanisms; Adoption of an Ethics Code for all Agency personnel;
* Development of a quality culture among its members and collaborators, both internal and external;
* Establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and continuous improvement of its activities;
* The Agency's periodic external evaluation; CYQAA's collaboration with ENQA, EQAR, and other European and international higher education organizations.

To ensure that its quality policy is followed, CYQAA implements the following internal quality assurance mechanisms (CYQAA, 2015):

* Activity to organize (external evaluations) on a six-month basis, systematic progress monitoring, internal quality assurance decision making via personnel and council meetings, task and objective achievement appraisal feedback;
* Formal and informal hearings of higher education institutions and their representatives on the development of legislation, criteria, procedures, and instruments for external evaluation and accreditation processes;
* Implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), a total management tool used in Cyprus and Europe's civil service;
* Adoption of the "Code of Conduct and Ethics of Civil Servants" for Agency employees;
* The code of conduct and ethics of civil servants focuses on the basic standards and rules that govern officers' behaviour when they come into direct, personal, or telephone contact with citizens, all while adhering to the general obligations of decorum, professionalism, and honesty;
* Respect for legality, obligation to impartiality, objective judgment, credibility, accountability, and transparency, duty of equal treatment of citizens, and good administration are the ethical standards that govern officials' actions when dealing with citizens' affairs;
* Monitoring, review, and regular updating of the mechanisms and procedures for evaluation and accreditation;
* Monthly meetings of the Agency's Council - The Council thoroughly examines comments, analyses, and suggestions and, when appropriate, incorporates them into the decision-making process;
* Feedback on the Agency's organization, tools, criteria, performance, and evaluation and accreditation procedures is collected and analysed from stakeholders such as higher education institutions, members of external evaluation committees, student associations, faculty associations, professional associations, and the ministry of education;
* Guidance and training for members of external evaluation committees, as well as specialized training for Agency personnel;
* Creating and updating an expert registry with experienced experts from all disciplines from across Europe;
* Systematic examination of ENQA and other organizations' publications and reports with the goal of implementing best practices;
* Seminars for higher education institutions aimed at updating and guiding them on the Agency's policies and external evaluation procedures;
* Forms, questionnaires, and documents, among other things, are being developed and updated on a regular basis to promote transparency and equal treatment of higher education institutions;
* Monitoring and evaluation of the Agency's procedures and activities by the Agency's Council and the competent assigned officer;
* Bottom-up procedures are used to record and present the Agency's activities, as well as to distribute day-to-day tasks to members of the personnel.

The CYQAA Council pledges to ensure the implementation of this quality policy and its periodic updating, taking into account the evolution of higher education matters, the Agency's and society's needs, and, most importantly, by implementing innovative practices that unify, through quality, the European Area for Higher Education.

The Agency's current quality policy has been communicated to all internal and external partners, and it is available on the Agency's website.

### **Desktop Research Results in Portugal**

There is a statistical desert in Portuguese and European data on education of people +65. The means in adult education are all in professional qualification and not in non-formal education.

#### Schools (formal)

The following are education and training operators of the National Qualifications System:

* Public elementary and secondary schools.
* Public and private professional schools.
* Private and cooperative education establishments (EPC) with pedagogical parallelism or recognition of public interest.
* The professional training and professional rehabilitation centers directly managed and protocol managed by the IEFP.
* Training entities integrated in other ministries or other legal persons governed by public law (for example: hotel and tourism schools of Turismo de Portugal, technological schools of the Ministry of Economy).
* Private sector certified training providers.
* Companies and other organizations that provide training for their workers.
* by DGERT (General directorate for employment and labor relations)

#### Training companies (formal)

* Certification of training companies is carried out by DGERT (General directorate for employment and labor relations)
* The Education and Training Courses are a path of basic education with double certification, that is, in which the social, scientific and professional skills required for the exercise of a professional activity are developed and at the same time the basic level of education is obtained by ANQEP (National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education)

#### Internal certification system of RUTIS

Senior Universities of Excellence

#### ISO (formal)

ISO 21001 – Management system for educational/training organizations. First ISO standard for management systems for educational organizations.

This standard applies to any organization that uses a curriculum to support skill development through teaching, learning or research, regardless of type, size or method of delivery. This means that it can be applied at all levels of formal and non-formal education, such as: Nursery; High school; Professional education; University education or Short term professional training

It also means that it can be used by public or private organisations, larger or smaller, including training departments of companies in non-educational sectors; and offering face-to-face, e-learning, blended or hybrid education and training services, by Projeto Europeu VET21001 (Aveiro).

## **Qualitative Research Results**

For the whole EU-CERT consortium of 6 partners across 5 countries (Germany, Croatia, France, Cyprus and Portugal), each partner approached 5 experts in the field of AE to ask them questions related to their experiences and the current state of AE in each country.

### **Qualitative Research Results in Germany**

Through the interviews, the following main and sub-categories could be formed.

#### Quality criteria for infrastructure

* Qualified human resources, adequate staff
* Technical equipment
* Digital infrastructure: existence of a digital infrastructure, equipment with digital terminals, mediation of digital content and implementation of digital teaching, EDP lessons, Excel knowledge
* Spatial equipment: accommodation options, specialist rooms, room size and infrastructure for the disabled

#### Quality criteria for the organisation of the teaching operation

* Compatibility with the family: family friendly course organisation
* (inter)national cooperation: with companies, other educational institutions, job market, exchange programmes, company visits
* General conditions: course size, teaching format (digital vs. face-to-face), number of hours, substitution arrangements or course duration and format (part-time vs. full-time)

#### Quality criteria for internal and external communication

* external communication of information about the educational offer: course duration and course format as well as course subjects, course content, infrastructure and performance requirements, exam admission and pass or fail rates, reports on experiences and evaluations by participants
* ways of communicating: open day, "direct sales”, internet presence, one or more channels
* internal communication at teacher-pupil level: open, honest and transparent communication between teacher and students as valuable, communication at eye level, exchange, recognition and trust
* transparency: course-relevant information is provided in a timely and comprehensive manner, transparent communication of assessment methods and criteria and of audit content and scope

#### Quality criteria for suitability of the participants

* should be checked or ensured before or at the beginning of an upgrading programme
* restrictions on access: meet requirements, training qualifications, journeyman's examinations and professional experience
* prior knowledge, experience and skills: previous experience which are relevant for the respective upgrading training, basic knowledge, professional and practical experience, (area-specific) specialist knowledge and leadership skills
* offer a preliminary course to refresh or develop necessary basics or alternatively repeat basics (plateau formation) at the beginning or within the course

#### Quality criteria for teachers

* willingness for lifelong learning: continuous training and development, learning through exchange with students, openness to modernization, participation in teacher training
* experience: relevance of professional and practical experience, career and industry-specific experience, review of experience
* competences: course-specific subject knowledge and subject, didactic competences, basic education, basic knowledge, social competence, organisational competence, motivation skills

#### Quality criteria for course design

* examination reference: course content relevant to exams, possibilities for exam preparation
* exchange opportunities: creating opportunities for exchange, e.g. with other participants or through cooperation
* methodology: methods and social forms in the classroom, frontal teaching not suitable, more varied methodological design desired, positive perception of other methods and social forms such as group work, project work or company visits, methods and social forms that demand and promote cooperative and independent work
* international orientation of content: thematisation of European and international issues related to the thematic area of upgrading training, inclusion of European and international topics, such as conflicts and their effects or trends and developments, especially against the background of globalization, English language
* other design features: content should be innovative, challenging, realistic and related to current developments and issues
* consideration of individual needs: pupils are given opportunities to help shape the curriculum and are given freedom to make decisions, opportunities to set individual priorities, to bring in their own experiences
* refreshing and acquisition of hard skills: new technical knowledge and competences building on the basics, relevance of the basic knowledge, repetition and consolidation, English language skills, IT skills
* promotion of soft skills: independence, self-reflection, self-management, self-confidence, presentation skills, linguistic fluency and formulation skills as well as entrepreneurial thinking, leadership skills, teamwork and cooperation skills, analytical and strategic thinking, problem-solving skills
* professional relevance and reference to working life: course content either vocationally relevant or related to the working life of the participants, practical and industry-specific

### **Qualitative Research Results in Croatia**

The 5 experts approached in Croatia all currently work in the AE sector as trainers, educators, lecturers or youth workers. The respondents were 3 females and 2 males all aged between 30-50 and had experience in the sector ranging from 3 to 15 years.

Among the experts approached for this report, all 5 agreed that they have experienced a variety of Adult Education Programmes (AEPs) ranging from formal teaching of skills-based AEP to NEETs, early school leavers, gender-focused towards migrant women and mothers to non-formal and informal teaching of state-verified AEPs aimed at reskilling and upskilling individuals.

As to the assessment of AE all participants in the survey indicated that they all follow the Croatian Qualifications Framework. The principles guiding the development and drafting of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) are as follows:

1. Respecting Croatian legacy and the existing system of education;  
2. Embracing EU guidelines and the experience of other countries in setting up their respective qualification frameworks;  
3. Preparing society for European integration;  
4. Transparency of existing and new qualifications;  
5. Clear categorization of qualifications by reference level, type and class;  
6. Vertical and horizontal progression of competences;  
7. Equal educational opportunities;  
8. Partnership among state institutions, employers, unions and educators;  
9. Upgrading the capacity of the CROQF

Further, as far as assessment is concerned all the survey participants in Croatia indicated that this was an important area for them. Those dealing with women, migrants and other disadvantaged groups see assessment as a means to enhance the career prospects of their learners and/or getting their learners assimilated into the wider society. Therefore, some accreditation of skills gained by adult learners is an important aspect and all 5 survey participants felt that this is a much-needed aspect to motivate their learners but also get them to some meaningful assimilation into society.

Regarding certain statements from the qualitative survey these were the replies by the participants and experts:

Statement a) Adult education programs should not focus on the training of basic skills of the participants but should rather improve their knowledge and competencies in specific areas of expertise.

All agreed that skills and knowledge plus competences go hand-in-hand and these cannot be separated. They all teach their learners the knowledge while improving their skills, e.g., for those migrant women and mothers entrepreneurial skills so they could start their own small scale startups within their communities and local regions.

Statement b) Adult education programs should be internationally oriented which can be achieved by cooperations of adult education institutions and international companies.

Everyone agreed that an international and global outlook is important for themselves and all their learners too. They all pointed to Croatia joining the Euro Zone and the Schengen area from 1 January 2023. Within such a scenario they wanted to make sure their learners remain competitive among other 350+ million Euro Zone citizens and do not lose out to their fellow Europeans.

Statement c) Adult education programs need to focus on the individual needs of the participants and adequate content with connection to their work-life. International or rather European issues should not be discussed during the AEPs.

As for statement a) above all respondents felt that both issues were integrated and equally important for their learners. While teaching their learners the skills for work-life balance, the respondents wanted their learners to be remain competitive and again all cited the imminent joining of Croatia to the Euro Zone from 1 January 2023.

Statement d) The educators of adult education programs need to have various competences in different fields of adult education and should not be specifically trained in one AE area or program.

While all agreed that multi-skills were important among themselves as AE trainers, educators, teachers and lecturers they also took the view that some kind of specialism was necessary which they could pass on to their learners. In any case, they all pointed out to the access their learners had within their AE institutions such as their colleagues and peers who could pass on some specialized knowledge to the learners. For example, one was an ELT (English Language Tutor) and mentioned that when it came to other fields such as accounting or engineering learners would go to other departments and colleagues to learn these skills.

In terms of the future opportunities and concerns no one had any concerns but more worried about the future opportunities. All agreed that new technology skills such as AI, VR ought to be taught to the current learners especially to close the skills gaps in the labour market within Croatia among the migrants, women & mothers and newly arrived dependents from previous Yugoslav nations such as Bosnia, Kosovo and nearby regions. Again, Croatia joining the Euro Zone from 1 January 2023 was cited as the big factor. However, some were worried that there were not enough funds allocated to the expansion of AEPs within Croatia. Therefore, all looked to working with EU partners and such programmes as Erasmus to generate funding and/or build resources within their own institutions. Knowledge gained from such programmes as Erasmus Plus could then be shared among their own institutions and also among their learner population having a much wider impact within local communities. All saw such cooperation at EU levels a win-win situation for the institutions themselves, their learners and local communities.

### **Qualitative Research Results in France**

In the survey were 5 participants. In terms of demographical and occupational composition of our target group, 75% were women and the majority of them was above 30 years old. The respondents included student teachers and a trainer/teacher. These were mainly working at a vocational school or a university, with one of them working at a secondary school.

In the first section concerning the certification system of adult education programmes, the participants were asked about the extent of integration of the criteria investigated throughout the project.

The results were very diverse and according to more than half of respondents, the following criteria where either completely integrated or mostly integrated: (2) development of basic and transversal skills by using innovative methods; (3) high competence of the adult educator and (4) contribution to the development of a European area of skills and qualification. On the other hand, the survey results indicate that (5) inclusive approaches of adult education programmes and (6) support of general European values and shared values of democracy are not integrated at all.

According to the respondents, (5) inclusive approaches of adult education programmes are of a particular relevance for the adult education programmes, followed by (1) effective strategies for enhancing basic skills and (2) development of basic and transversal skills by using innovative methods.

The survey results show that adult educational programmes are relatively important for raising awareness of EU citizenship. Also, most of the respondents believe that they will be even more significant in terms of future social, political and economic development.

According to the responses to the following question, the most important aspects of adult educational programmes and their quality are: (1) increase of efficiency of public expenditure and investments in education training and news work by removing current issues; as well as (2) providing high quality learning opportunities adapting the newly acquired knowledge to reality of working life and the demands in different domains.

Furthermore, the survey results show the following trends:

* The specific adult educational programme focuses on mostly international content, rather than regional content, as well as active participation in international exchange.
* It also focuses largely on digital communication, rather than face to face interaction.
* Majority of adult educational programme opportunities are provided by using classic teaching methods.

The insights and reflections of the respondents suggest that:

* Learners with disadvantages have fewer adult learning opportunities.
* The adult educational programme contributes to a shared European identity as a tool for EU empowerment.
* The forms of cooperation with enterprises within the educational project include involving guest speakers from companies and various lecturers.
* The adult educational programme provides opportunities for learning online as well as lifelong learning.
* The challenges include keeping up with the trends as well as retaining the motivation to complete the programme.

### **Qualitative Research Results in Cyprus**

The inquiries were answered by five experts in the field. Each of them has worked in adult education for over ten years and has held various positions in various programs. In terms of the advantages of an adult education program, participants shared similar responses, such as that it enhances confidence and empowers the individual. Moreover, they provide more professional opportunities, allow for the exchange of ideas and the opportunity for international socialization. As they stated, everyone, regardless of their role in the programme, has the opportunity to participate in this program as a form of lifelong learning. Among the negative aspects of the different forms of adult education, it was that not everyone could participate.

The participants had to agree or disagree and express their thoughts on the statements below.

Statement a) Adult education programs should not focus on the training of basic skills of the participants but should rather improve their knowledge and competencies in specific areas of expertise.

Participants did not agree entirely. Three of them indicated that they would prefer to be able to train specific skills. It was also agreed by others that this is an era of expertise and it is essential to develop certain soft skills. Among participants, one stated that it would be ideal if they could do both, and it should be assumed that all adults possess basic skills, which is why adult education is intended to give adults lacking basic skills a second chance at employment, and thereafter, at success.

Statement b) Adult education programs should be internationally oriented which can be achieved by cooperations of adult education institutions and international companies.

Various opinions were expressed here, stating that neither of them could completely agree nor disagree with each other. Taking into account their responses, AEPs should be recognized at the European/international level; however, the programs should be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of participants and to account for the specificities of each country.

Statement c) Adult education programs need to focus on the individual needs of the participants and adequate content with connection to their work-life. International or European issues should not be discussed during the AEPs.

They all disagree with this statement. As a result of globalization, they do not believe that locally based solutions can provide effective solutions in the modern world.

Statement d) The educators of adult education programs need to have various competences in different fields of adult education and should not be specifically trained in one AE area or program.

One of the responses to the survey was that adult education is nested within the field of educational sciences, which is purposefully used in plural form (educational sciences). In light of this, an adult educator should be proficient in an array of disciplines including educational design, assessment, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and many more. The world is ever changing and updating one's skills is an inevitability. Others, however, stated that specific/specialized expertise should be transferred in terms of knowledge and skills. Additionally, not having specialized training in a particular area may result in a lack of depth.

In response to the question of how important adult education will be in five years from now, all the respondents agree that it will be extremely important. In the current era of specialization, the more skills you possess, the greater your chance of success.

Below there are some answers to the question on the different target groups addressed within adult education programs:

* VET (upskilling and reskilling education)
* Basic literacy education
* SDGs/ESD education
* Civic and community education
* Digital education

In response to the question of how far do AEPs focus on different types of learners and also adapt their course design to accommodate disabled learners and participants, the answers were also similar. Although it depends on the program, the AEPs are not always inclusive of marginalized groups, the working class is not always included, and people with disabilities are not always given the opportunity to participate. According to one participant, disabled trainers are also excluded.

To the question, which aspects of adult education should be expanded in the near future, and which factors of adult education need to be improved, digital learning and literacy have all been rated as important. The SDG competencies were also among the answers, explaining that without digital literacy, an adult is illiterate. Without the SDGs, communities cannot function sustainably. One participant suggested that technology-tailored applications and generic skills should be considered. There was also a suggestion for education for the third age group, which is a very neglected segment of the population. A further suggestion was the reference to general programs for professional development, as well as skills that will assist in reentering the workforce.

In response to the question of which aspects of adult education should no longer be implemented as extensively as they are in the current measure, several responses were provided. A participant stated that it has been argued that adult education does not reach those who are most in need of it. In their view, adult education should move beyond its 'one-size-fits-all' approach and implement tailored programs designed to target diverse populations and be truly inclusive.

According to another participant, no aspect is considered redundant. However, a common area for post-compulsory education should be clearly defined, indicating clearly the agencies responsible for different types of education in order to avoid overlaps. There should be a framework for validating, accrediting, and recognising educational qualifications across formal, non-formal, and informal educational settings.

They also have stated different criteria which show a high or excellent quality of adult education programs. These are:

* Meeting the objectives
* Added value to the participants
* Added value to the organization and society
* Transference, application and retention of knowledge and skills acquired
* Breadth of impact
* Depth of impact on individuals
* Depth of impact on the targeted group as a whole
* Impact on the community as a whole

In response to the question of how far adult education programmes should be supported, they all expressed a desire for better financial support during their implementation. It is also important that they receive better financial support; however, a participant noted that increased funding does not necessarily translate into improved quality.  According to another participant, investments in AEP should be intensified.

Regarding the last question on which terms they would like to emphasize regarding adult education in general, each of them stated that they believe that stricter evaluation criteria will lead to a higher standard of education. Ideally, they should be more diagnostic and designed so as to be inclusive and target certain groups. In order to achieve these goals, they should establish certain standards and criteria, and ensure that experts are prepared to deliver them.

### **Qualitative Research Results in Portugal**

The results of the survey show that adult educators in Portugal are generally positive about the structures, certification and quality assurance of adult education. They value the following aspects of the system:

* Clarity and transparency: The structures and requirements of certification and quality assurance are clearly defined and transparent.
* Coherence: The system is coherent with the national and European standards for adult education.
* Support: Adult educators receive support in implementing the requirements of certification and quality assurance.

However, the adult educators also expressed some concerns:

* Bureaucratic burden: The bureaucratic burden of certification and quality assurance can be high.
* Lack of resources: There is a lack of resources to fulfil the requirements of certification and quality assurance.
* Lack of flexibility: The system can sometimes lack flexibility and fail to meet the specific needs of learners.

Overall, the results show that the certification and quality assurance system for adult education in Portugal is generally effective. However, there are some areas where the system could be improved, e.g. by reducing the bureaucratic burden and providing additional resources.

## **Quantitative Research Results**

### **Quantitative Research Results in Germany**

On the German side, it was possible to generate 26 completed questionnaires. Of the participants, 14 were female and 12 male. 15 persons belong to the age group 21-30 years, eight to the age group 31-40, two to the age group 41-50 and one to the age group 51-60. The target group was in the (higher) educational/vocational sector who have points of contact with continuing vocational education and training programmes, especially upgrading programmes, and are therefore able to name quality criteria for them.

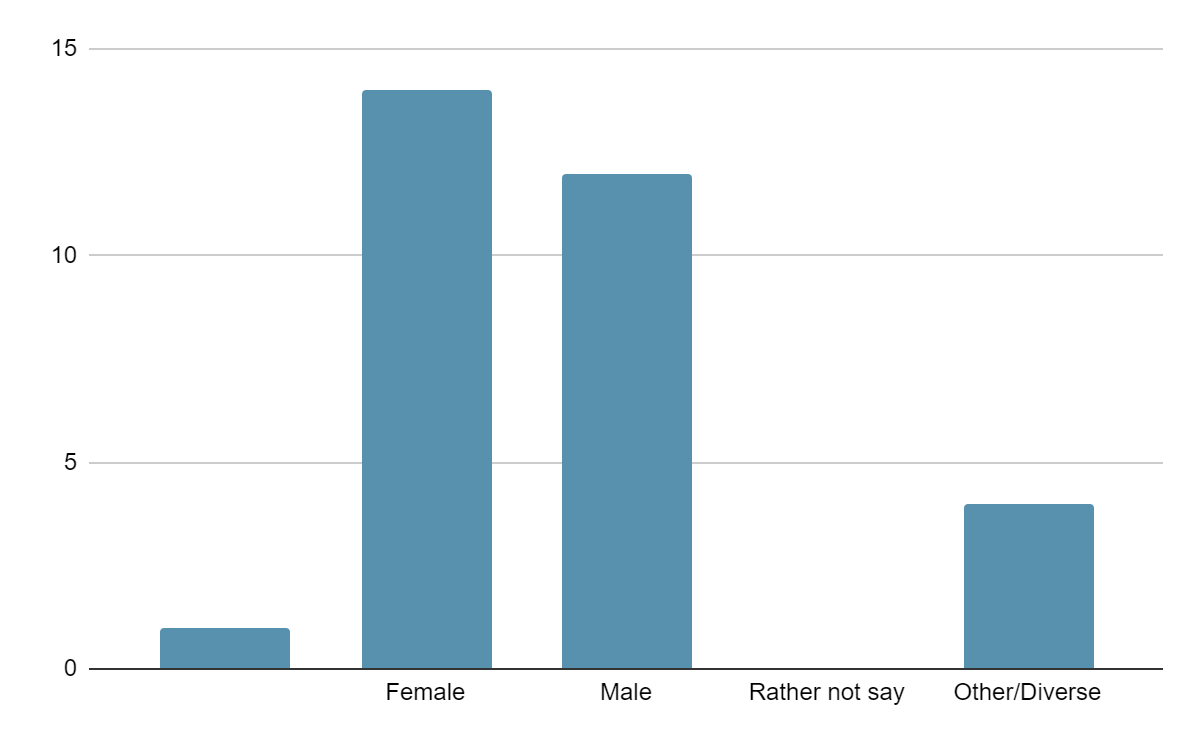
* Over 80% of respondents believe that Effective Basic Skills/Improvement Strategies are partially integrated into upgrading programmes.
* But: The criteria Contribution to the development of a European area of competences and qualifications, Inclusive approach of adult education / upgrading programmes and Support of general European values as well as common democratic values

are considered to be integrated in the programme by only about 15% of the respondents.

* The criterion of strengthening quality through mobility as well as cross-border and international cooperation, in which the participants can participate, is considered important or very important by about 75% of the participants.
* 88.46% of the participants consider the criterion High competence of the adult teacher as important for programmes of upgrading training. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that approx. 12% of the participants find that the criterion is not integrated into the programme.
* Whether a contribution to the development of a European area of competences and qualifications would be significant is half answered in the affirmative and half seen as not significant.
* It is also striking that when it comes to the topic of digitalisation in programmes, the results between 50 % and 60 % are only represented and not strongly represented.

### **Quantitative Research Results in Croatia**

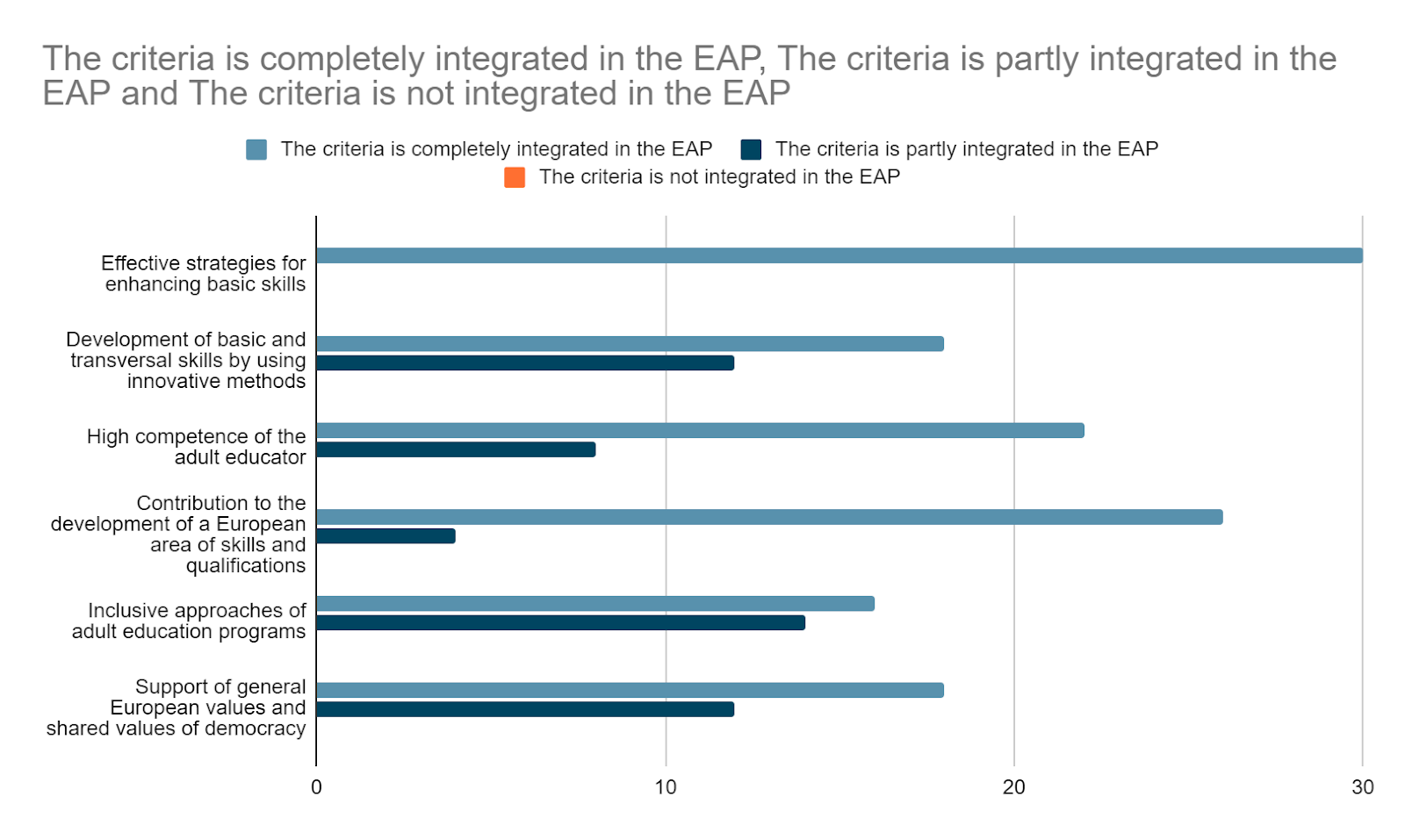
In Croatia, the majority of participants in the questionnaire were female, there were less male and only a few who consider themselves other/divers, and also some of them would not like to share their gender (see chart below).



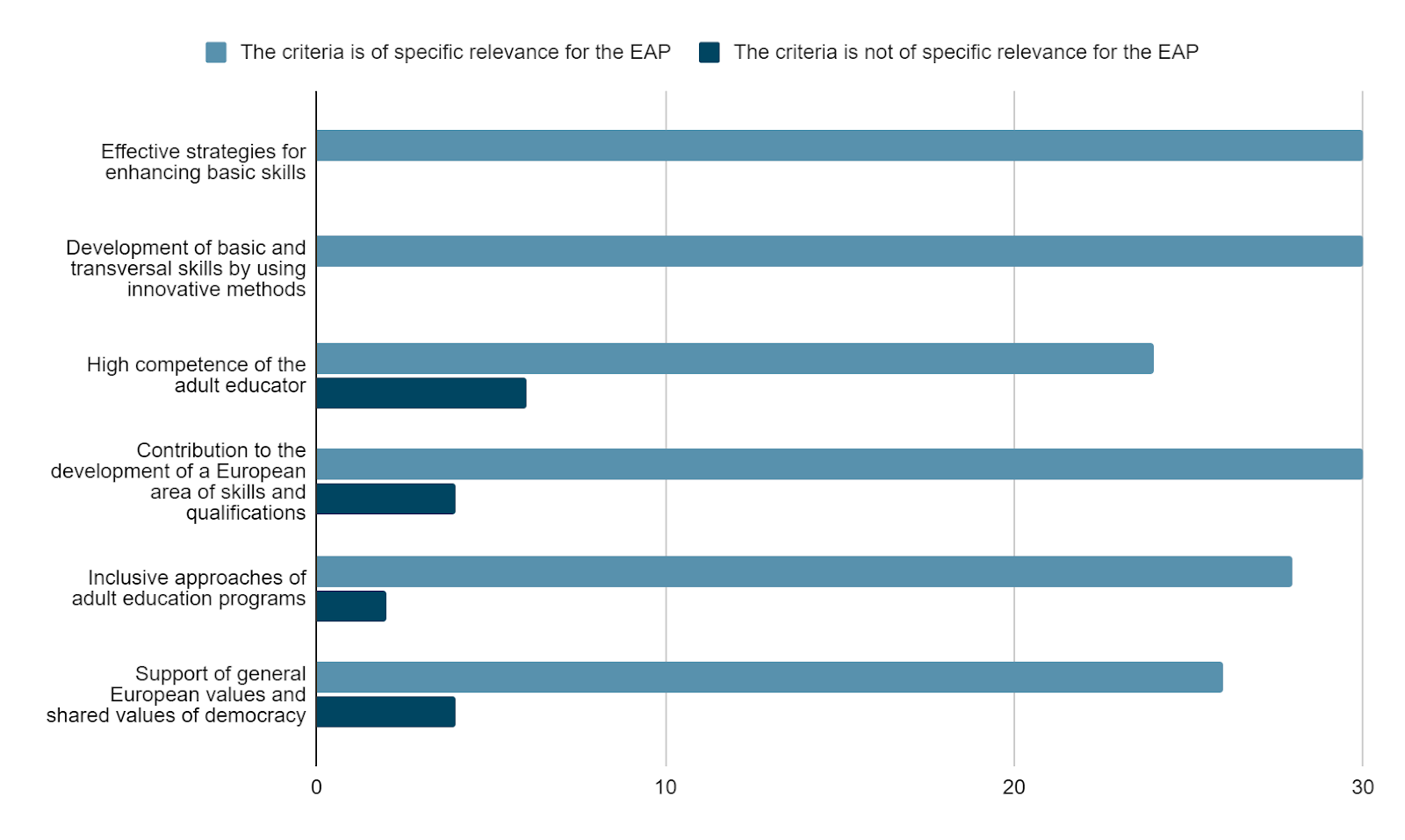
The majority of participants were at the age of 31-40, then 21-30, and 41-50, and only a few were 51-60.

Their professional status was mostly a trainer/teacher (adult education) with about 26 %. Only a few of the participants were a student teacher or other. Within their profession, 15 % of them were at a vocational school, about 4 % were at university as a student teacher, and 11 % were other (adult education trainers in NGOs/SMEs/Social Enterprises).

In the next part, they had to decide whether the criteria is integrated in the adult education program or not. 30 % found that they have completely integrated “Effective strategies for enhancing basic skills” in their program. The second highest rate has the criteria “Contribution to the development of a European area of skills and qualifications”, which is considered completely integrated by about 26 % of the participants. The least completely integrated criteria in their programs is considered as “Inclusive approaches of adult education programs” by about 16 %. You can see all results in the following chart.



After that, the participants had to rate, if the criteria is of specific relevance for the adult education program. As you can see below, the participants considered all criteria of specific relevance for the program, as they were rated between 22 % and 30 %.

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In the next part, the participants had to rate the importance of something related to the adult education program on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being unimportant, 10 being important).

When it comes to raising international awareness in the content of the adult education programs,

* 70 % rated with 9
* 10 % rated with 8
* 6,7 % rated with either 10, 7, or 6.
* From this it can be read that the international awareness within the programs are considered important.

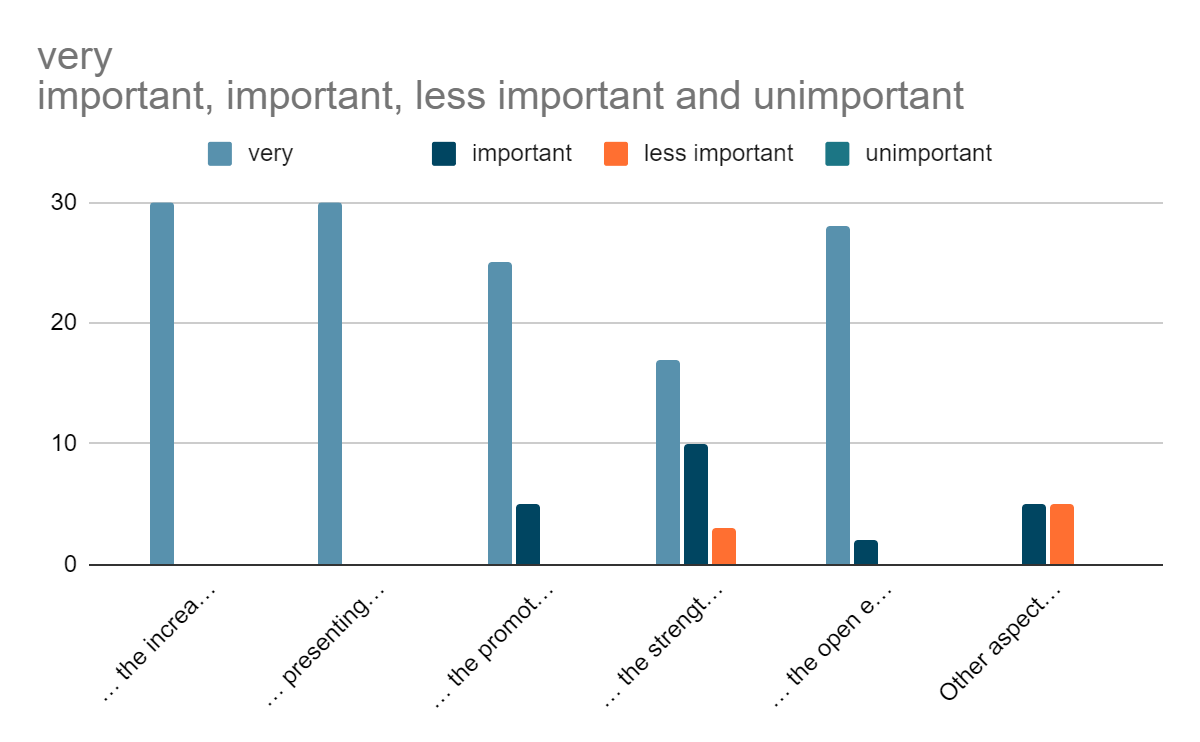
When it comes to the importance of current social, political and economic developments in the next five years,

* 93,3 % rated with 9
* 6,7 % rated with 10
* From this it can be read that current issues are considered important for the participants.

The next question wanted to know in how far digital teaching and learning is considered either represented or rejected in the adult education programs.

* It is noticeable that the aspect of “educators work with digital media during the AEP sessions” is considered most strongly represented (about 28 %).
* The aspect which is considered most represented is that of “The communication between educators and participants is of intersocial as well as digital nature” (about 11 %).
* The aspects are never rated as rather rejected by more than 5 %.
* There is no aspect which was considered “strongly rejected” by the participants. This leads to the conclusion, that digital teaching and learning is more or less represented in the programs.

The quality of the programs seem to be “very important” for the majority of participants as you can see in the chart below.

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In the next section, the particioants were asked to choose their tendency towards aspects which are the focus of the adult education programs. In the following, only the highest tendency will be shown.

* International content (33,3 %) > regional content
* Digital communication < face-to-face interaction (36,7 %)
* Cooperation with international enterprises < independent courses and programs (40 %)
* Active participation in international exchange < the demands in the regional work-life of the participants (58,6 %)
* Innovative teaching methods < classic teaching methods (40 %)
* Specifically trained educators < broader trained educators, which tutor each a variety of different courses and programs (50 %)
* Useful extension of the participants individual soft skills for their individual working sphere < extension of a broader variety of skills of the participants (36,7 %)

In the following, there will be the most important aspects of the qualitative open questions on the individual use of teaching methods.

* Adult education sector in Croatia vital for reducing disparities in learning outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged learners
* designed to meet the diverse needs of adult learners from all backgrounds
* providing tailored support to learners who need it most
* innovative and flexible teaching methods
* providing learners with a range of support services that address their broader needs
* help learners overcome economic barriers to learning
* provide access to community resources that can help learners address social or personal challenges that may affect their learning
* contribute significantly to the European Union (EU) in terms of empowering a shared international European identity and promoting participation in international affairs
* promoting a shared European identity
* promote this shared identity by offering courses and programs that focus on European history, culture, and politics, as well as providing opportunities for learners to engage with their European counterparts through study visits, exchanges, and international projects
* preparing learners to engage in a globalized world
* offer language courses, which enable learners to communicate effectively across borders and participate in international organizations and networks
* promote social and economic development, which are central to its broader foreign policy objectives
* importance of cooperating with enterprises and businesses to ensure a close connection between adult education projects and the work-life of participants
* align their programs with the needs of the labor market, ensuring that learners are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the workforce

### **Quantitative Research Results in France**

In the quantitative research, there were three participants conducted in face-to-face interviews. As for the demographic and occupational composition, these included two women and one man, 25 to 30 years old, with two of them being students and one of them working as a project developer.

They have indicated a various extent of experience with participating actively in the field of adult education, from no experience whatsoever to being a student or having created several courses. As for passive participation in adult education, one of them attended a university, one of them participated in FutureLearn adult educational programme, and one had no experience.

Their perceptions of adult education vary, with their definitions ranging from “any sharing of useful information among adult people” to “a systematic engagement in individual learning activities aimed at gaining new knowledge and skills”.

The responses of our respondents show there is an awareness of different forms of adult education, with some of them having personal experience in different forms of both formal and informal education.

The level of importance of adult education for their life is perceived differently by every person interviewed, from not important at all to being an absolute necessity.

According to the statements of majority of our respondents:

* Adult education programmes should improve knowledge and competencies in specific areas of expertise of their participants, rather than their basic skills.
* They should be internationally-oriented by means of cooperation of adult education institutions with international companies.
* They need to focus on the individual needs of participants and be relevant for their work life.
* The educators involved should be specifically trained in a certain adult education area.

The participants interviewed have indicated that there is space for improvement in the following areas:

* focus on practise rather than theory
* structural flexibility, motivation, engagement and practicality
* range of programmes provided

The elements perceived by the respondents as obstacles are:

* focusing too much on theory rather than practical skills
* the related bureaucracy which may deter a large number of people who would like to engage in adult education
* cost of education which should be adapted to different target groups

As for the role of the educator, the respondents suggested that he or she should act as a point of contact if needed; should be able to share knowledge and engage people and to pass on his or her knowledge, support and motivate the participants.

Furthermore, the participants of our interviews identified the following criteria as signs of high-quality adult educational programmes: skilled people; official reviews and ranking; as well as recognition and the number of participants.

Finally, they believe that quality of educational programmes must be further increased in the future by:

* investing in internships and other exchange programmes allowing participants to get real-life experience
* allocating more funding to equipment
* reducing costs in order to allow for participation of people with different worldviews.

### **Quantitative Research Results in Cyprus**

30 Cypriots with experience in the field of adult education participated in this Broad Questionnaire to examine the quality assurance for ERASMUS+, and to determine the needed quality criteria. The questionnaire was created and distributed in Google Forms for an easier analysis, in both Greek and English. The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections and contained 28 questions, including 8 open-ended questions. The survey consisted of three sections, the first of which collected personal information, the second collected assessments and evaluations of the AEP's criteria, and the third and final section contained open-ended questions about their individual teaching techniques. Based on the data collected in the first section, a total of 26 participants in the survey are adult educators or trainers, most of whom work in vocational and adult education institutions. 6 of them are university students, and 3 are middle school educators, all of them involved in AEPs.

In the second section, participants had to rate the criteria on a multiple choice grid to determine whether they were fully, partially or not at all involved in AEP programmes. Implementation of effective strategies to improve basic skills is the first evaluation criteria. 55% of respondents said the criteria are fully addressed, while 45% said they are partially addressed. Regarding the second criterion, the development of basic and cross-cutting skills through innovative methods, 65% of respondents said that these criteria are partially integrated. The rest of the participants indicated that they are fully integrated. A third criterion concerns the level of competence of the adult educator. The majority of respondents (62%) stated that the criteria are partially integrated, while 4% reported that they are not incorporated at all.

A fourth criterion relates to the contribution to the development of a European area of competences and qualifications. 62% indicated that they are partially integrated, while 38% are fully integrated. The fifth criterion relates to the integrative nature of adult education programs. 48% of respondents indicated that the programs are fully integrated, while another 48% indicated that the programmes are partially integrated. A 6th criterion was the support for general European values and shared values of democracy in which 52% stated that they were completely integrated and 10% stated that they were not. Another question on a multiple-choice grid asked participants to rate the importance of certain criteria for AEPs.

The chart below illustrates how important each quality criterion is. According to the color scheme, blue indicates that the criteria is very important, red indicates that it is important, yellow is less important, and green is unimportant. AEP programs take into account each of the criteria in a significant way, according to the majority of participants. From left to right, the criteria are as follows.

Forms response chart. Question title: 10. Πόσο σημαντικές είναι οι ακόλουθες πτυχές των ΠΕΕ σε ότι αφορά στην ποιότητα τους;
Γενικά, τα ΠΕΕ εστιάζουν στη σημασία των ποιοτικών κριτηρίων .....



How important are the following aspects of AEPs concerning their individual quality?  
In general the AEP focuses on the importance of the quality criteria of … 

. Number of responses: .

a) increasing the efficiency of public spending and the corresponding investment in education, training and youth work by addressing urgent social, political or educational issues

b) providing quality learning opportunities by training participants in their basic skills and adapting the newly acquired knowledge to the participants' everyday work and the necessities and requirements in their individual fields of work

(c) promoting entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship among participants by deepening their insights and competences also in relation to entrepreneurship as a benefit for their individual working life

(d) strengthening quality through the provision of mobility and cross-border and international cooperation in which participants can participate

e) openly engaging with foreign cultures and dealing with cultural differences and commonalities by focusing on EU citizenship and international shared values and identities, are qualities considered important in the AEPs.

This part also contained scale questions. Based on a scale of 1-10, with one representing the least importance, this chart below displays participants' answers to the question of how important AEP is in raising international awareness about EU citizenship. 43% of participants rated it a 9 while 17% rated it a 10 and 30% rated it as an 8.

The charter below demonstrates the answers to the question on how important will the content of the AEP be in five years concerning the current social, political as well as economic developments. A majority of 80% rated it over 8 with 14 participants rating it 9.

Forms response chart. Question title: 7. Πόσο σημαντικό είναι το περιεχόμενο των ΠΕΕ στο πλαίσιο της αναγκαιότητας ευαισθητοποίησης διεθνώς και σε ό,τι αφορά στις ιθαγένειες της ΕΕ;
Βαθμολογήστε από το 1 έως το 10 (1 – ασήμαντο έως 10 – σημαντικό)



How important is the content of the AEP against the background of the necessity of raising international awareness also in terms of EU-Citizenships?  
Rate on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 – unimportant to 10 – important) 

. Number of responses: 30 responses.

The next section included scale questions ranging from 1 to 6 that indicated two different criteria. Regarding the AEP content focus on 1 being international and 6 being regional, 40% of the participants gave it a five. Another 20% rated it a 4, while 10 rated it between 1-3.

Below is a chart that shows the responses to the question whether the AEP emphasizes digital communication (1) or face-to-face interaction (6). Most participants rated it a 4, but another 20% rated it a 3 and 5 respectively.

Forms response chart. Question title: 12. Τα Προγράμματα Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων εστιάζουν στην 


 The AEP focuses on
. Number of responses: 30 responses.

The chart below demonstrates the answers to whether the AEPs focus on cooperation with international enterprises (1) or active participation in international exchange (6). 40% of the participants rated it at number 4 and another 40% at 5.

Forms response chart. Question title: 13. Τα Προγράμματα Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων εστιάζουν σε


 The AEP focuses on
. Number of responses: 30 responses.

The 14th question asked whether the AEPs focus more on active participation in international exchanges (1) or regional work demands (6). Among the participants, 33% classified it as 4, 27% classified it as 5 and 20% classified it as 3.

Forms response chart. Question title: 14. Τα Προγράμματα Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων εστιάζουν


 The AEP focuses on
. Number of responses: 30 responses.

On the question whether the AEPs content focuses more on innovative teaching methods (1) or classic teaching methods (6) the majority rated it at 4. There were no answers at number 6.

Forms response chart. Question title: 15. Τα Προγράμματα Εκπαίδευσης Ενηλίκων εστιάζουν σε


 The AEP focuses on
. Number of responses: 30 responses.

In response to the question of whether the AEP focuses on specially qualified educators (1) or more broadly trained educators (6), 23 participants lean to believe they focus on a broader range of skills.

When asked whether the AEP focuses more on enhancing participants' individual soft skills for their respective work area or on building a broader range of skills for participants, 23 respondents believe that there is a greater emphasis on the extension of a broader variety of skills for participants.

To the question if the AEPs focuses on easy application of the course issues in the participants' work life (1) or to the improvement of individual skills independent of demands at work (6), the majority of the responses on the scale were on number 4 and number 5.

In the final section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to discuss their own experiences regarding the AEPs, including criteria, opportunities, and challenges. The first question was whether the AEP reduces disparities in learning outcomes for disadvantaged learners. While some respondents believe that disparities in learning outcomes can be reduced during the learning process in the AEP, a substantial number of respondents indicated that the programs are not always inclusive of participants with disabilities and there are also instances where the training programs are not inclusive of trainers with disabilities. They also indicated that the more trained the trainer is in terms of inclusion the better the outcomes.

In response to the question of how far the AEP contributes to the European Union in terms of fostering a shared international European identity and participation in international affairs, all participants expressed similar views, including the ability to meet people of different backgrounds and interests, and exposure to different cultures. They stated that the programmes offer them the opportunity to exchange ideas and develop an empowered international European identity.

As to how closely the AEP cooperates with (international) companies in order to ensure a close connection with the work lives of its participants, many participants responded that it depended on the program, while others expressed uncertainty about whether the level of collaboration was adequate. Other responses indicated that they worked closely, but others also indicated that improvements were necessary.

As indicated by the participants' responses, the European orientation and alignment of the AEP is evident in different ways, including funding, logos, acknowledgements, and the values that are promoted. As for the opportunities expressed by the participants were again similar, including exposure to new information, exchange of ideas with people with similar or different backgrounds and interests, exposure to new cultures, professional grow, lifelong learning opportunities.

### **Quantitative Research Results in Portugal**

The participants in the study in Portugal rated the following aspects of AEPs as particularly important:

* High competence of the adult educator: The participants attach great importance to the professional and pedagogical competence of the adult educators. They expect them to have in-depth knowledge of the content taught and the ability to convey it effectively.
* Development of basic and interdisciplinary skills: Participants\* see the teaching of basic and transversal skills, such as reading and writing skills, digital skills and social skills, as important. These skills are essential for successful participation in working life and society.
* Effective strategies for improving basic skills: Participants would like AEPs to include effective strategies to improve basic skills, e.g. through individualised support and the use of modern learning methods.
* Contribution to the development of a European area of competences and qualifications: The participants see a high value in the fact that AEPs contribute to a European area of competences and qualifications. This means that the qualifications acquired should be recognised in all European countries.
* Inclusive approaches to adult education programmes: Participants are in favour of an inclusive approach to adult education that takes into account the needs and opportunities of all learners. This may include, for example, the promotion of inclusion and diversity.
* Support for general European values and common democratic values: Participants emphasise the importance of AEPs supporting general European values and common democratic values. This can be done by teaching content on topics such as tolerance, respect and human rights.

The participants in the study rated the following aspects of digitalisation in AEPs as important:

* The adult educators work with digital media during the AEP sessions: Participants indicated that adult educators frequently use digital media such as presentations, videos and online tools in their AEPs.
* The AEP is part of a learning platform and is completed digitally by the participants: Many participants stated that the AEPs they attended were part of a learning platform and the content was completed digitally.
* Communication between adult educators and participants is both interpersonal and digital: Participants appreciate the opportunity to communicate with adult educators both in person and digitally.
* Participants learn how to use digital media and how to use them efficiently in their specific field of interest: a majority of participants stated that they learnt how to use digital media effectively in the AEPs.
* The adult educator is able to help participants with problems related to digital work and the use of digital media: The participants appreciate the support of the adult educators in the use of digital media.

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