

EWF poised to set a pioneer quality assurance benchmark for skills and qualifications recognition

The Rainbow project aims at developing a methodology which will align the European Qualifications of EWF with the European Qualifications Framework, defining a path for other systems to follow

Within its stated goal of continuously challenging and providing support to the Welding and Manufacturing Industry to better address the evolving market needs, EWF has set a goal, through the Rainbow project, to align the Welding Qualification System to the European Qualification Framework (EQF). This project comes on the heels of the success of its harmonised qualification system for personnel involved in the welding, joining and related technologies, which has worldwide recognition, which was started in 1992. The results can then be used for benchmarking with other areas, namely from the manufacturing sector, as an operational guidance document will be designed for the purpose, defining a path for other systems to follow.

The deep knowledge possessed by the EWF on EU policy tools is widely recognised and its training and qualification system has been showcased in several events of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), as a best practice for the international harmonisation of qualification and certification. The project is supported by Action 3 of the Erasmus+ programme, Support for Policy Reform.

The EWF System addresses a qualification in high demand in Europe, where welding is considered one of the advanced manufacturing technologies for the development of manufacturing industry, in line with the stated goal of having this sector representing 20% of EU Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2020 (Europe 2020). A study from the German Welding Society (DVS) has identified that the total added value generated by European joining industry is around 66 Billion Euros per year and that just over 1.2 million people work in welding and related technologies in the EU(28).

Welding contributes to 14% of all jobs, 67% of EU exports and 65% of all business R&D spend; it grows at 5% per year, which emphasizes the significant weight that joining technologies have in the manufacturing sector in terms of both added-value and jobs. ¹

An aligned qualification framework will increase the growth of manufacturing industry

The EWF Training and Qualification system has been established in the early '90 and is used in 31 European countries. Currently, in some countries, international qualification and core profiles in welding are included in the National Qualification Framework (NQFs), and thus in some cases already somehow related to the EQF. This increases the risk of each country to assign different

¹ "Study shows resilience of manufacturing and application of joining technology in Europe"

http://www.die-verbindungs-spezialisten.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Broschueren/Wertschoepfungsstudie/Value_Added_Study_Dokument_der_EWF_final_Englisch.pdf

matches between qualification systems, giving rise to significant confusion amongst users, both companies and professionals.

In this context, one of EWF targets has been to align the European welding qualifications to the EQF. This strategy is crucial to achieve transparency and the desirable skills comparability and recognition for lifelong learning, employability and mobility purposes in the EU. The EWF methodology for mapping international qualification to the EQF will be based in a minimum set of learning outcomes, assessment criteria, students' expected workload and allocation of ECVET credit points. It also includes quality assurance principles, as well as quality criteria for awarding EWF Qualifications.

The RAINBOW proposal will address all the main European Welding Qualifications, from the craftsman to the engineer, towards creating a common methodology for definition of learning outcomes (LOs) and standard procedures, to align with the EQF from level 2 to 7, which serves as a model for both practical skills-based and highly specialised qualifications.

The RAINBOW project is funded by European Union's Erasmus+ programme, under the Key Action 3, Support for Policy Reform. It responds to the guidelines related with Quality assurance at European level for enhanced transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications. Erasmus+, under the Key Action 3, supports actions aimed at stimulating innovative policy development, policy dialogue and implementation, and the exchange of knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth.

Contacts for media: EWF – European Federation for Welding, Joining and Cutting
Eurico Assunção (EGAssuncao@ewf@be) | Monica Sibisteanu (msibisteanu@ewf.be)

About the European Federation for Welding, Joining and Cutting

EWF is a pioneer in implementing a harmonized qualification and certification system for joining professionals. Through European projects EWF has been innovating in training methodologies, and involved in the development of new technologies and uses for joining. Through its member organisations, EWF has established a firm link to the local industry, providing knowledge and training as well as participating in research initiatives that address the most pressing questions and challenges in the field of joining technologies.

