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| **CONCEPT NOTE** |
| SUBJECT | **2019 ETF Conference “Skills and qualifications – benefits for people”** |
| Date | 06 -07 November 2019 |

ETF will host an international conference ‘Skills and qualifications - benefits for people’ in Torino on 6 and 7 November 2019.

**Content and aims of the event**

Most ETF partner countries now have National Qualification Frameworks in place and are modernising their qualification systems. Our conference will look wider, at how countries’ reforms of their qualifications systems can shape practices in curricula, learning and teaching, information about skills and qualifications and career guidance, to maximise the benefits of skills and qualifications to people.

Our event builds on our new toolkit “Skills and qualifications - benefits for people”. We have analysed how countries can embed qualification system reforms through integrating them with the other elements of VET systems and services in wider society. How do they ensure that benefits of skills development and acquisition of qualifications really reach people?

People need skills to get a job and they need qualifications to prove that they have skills. Employers need skilled people and they employ workers holding a qualification to know that their workers have the required skills. Economic, technological and workplace changes demand new skills and this has implications for qualifications. One aim of the conference and our new publication is to increase understanding and encourage communication and dialogue about skills and qualifications between different actors in the partner countries.

We look at how people know about skills and qualifications and how they acquire skills and qualifications. Crucially, we want to determine at the event what modes of learning, what formats to deliver career guidance, pedagogical approaches and what collaborative systems between training and employers work.

The next stage of reforms is application in practice - how we can maximise the opportunities for individuals and employers to benefit from new skills and qualifications. To achieve these benefits, we need to mobilise practitioners such as career counsellors, curriculum developers, school directors and teachers and trainers, who work directly with people, but who have not been involved in design of current reforms. Making them our allies in taking full advantage of the opportunities of new skills and qualifications is another goal.

ETF seeks to offer integrated, system advice; so that partner country experts and policy shapers can know what we propose is practical and feasible in their countries. Our 2019 event picks up from 2018’s Skills for the Future: Managing Transition, conference. Indeed, their themes are shared and interlinked. To manage transition towards skills for the future, we need to know how people learn, and what systems and tools countries need to put in place to support people in knowing about skills and qualifications and how to acquire them.

**Themes**

We are guided by these core questions: how do people know about skills and qualifications? What types of skills and qualifications do they need? How do people acquire them?

 And we go further – how do countries need to change curricula, teaching and learning and guidance, so that people can benefit more from skills and qualifications? What new practices and tools need to be developed?

Our plenaries communicate key findings from our study, to frame the in-depth discussions and conclusions of the workshops. We will report what individuals, employers and society expect from skills development and qualifications. What types of qualifications are needed; how people prefer to learn; what are the links between skills, qualifications and productivity; which groups in society are overlooked by employers and the education world. To illuminate findings, we draw on successful and innovative cases of skills development and qualification acquisition.

The workshops try to identify solutions to these urgent issues. Workshops are

1. Information and Guidance

This session discusses the variety, value and transformation of information on skills, qualifications, and occupations. Our cases explore sources of information and show how digital transformation facilitates dissemination of user-oriented career and labour market information. We see how new user-friendly tools and platforms such as qualification databases boost the visibility and use of labour market information systems and qualifications frameworks. We address the uneven availability and access that people may have to information on skills and qualifications, and how these gaps jeopardise investments in skills made by governments and people. After discussion of two cases, we will explore with participants a set of guiding questions inspiring reflection on existing gaps and possible steps to turnaround the challenges of existing information on skills, qualifications and occupations.

2) Flexible Curricula

Here we explore how we can create engaging and meaningful learning environments using a flexible modular curriculum approach. The idea of this workshop is not to discuss flexible curricula in general, or examples from different countries, but rather use a practical assignment that participants in small groups have to engage with in order to experience the process of designing an attractive modular VET curriculum and identify the challenges to implement such a curriculum in their own country.

3) The future roles of teachers and trainers, from teaching to supporting learning

This workshop examines the future roles of VET teachers and trainers in responding to, shaping and delivering new and innovative curricula. It is also structured around practical assignments that are carried out in small groups. They look at how the roles of VET teachers and trainers in the 21st century are expected to change and reflect on the most important developments anticipated in each country. Then they look at how teachers and trainers are supported to prepare themselves for their new roles, including through continuing professional development and collaboration. Finally, the challenges in each country are reviewed.

**Format**

Our event is structured plenary-workshops-plenary. At the workshops, we expect to get some answers to the questions posed in the section above.

Cases of proven success will be shared, including in plenary sessions.

**Participants**

There will be approximately 200 participants: experts, officials and social partner representatives from the ETF partner countries, representing the qualifications, guidance, curricula and teaching fields; plus, employers, school directors, teachers, trainers, teacher trainers, guidance counsellors; other EU member state experts, the European Commission, Cedefop, the European social partners and sector representatives. UNESCO and other international organisations (ILO, OECD) will represent the world beyond Europe and its neighbourhood.

**Languages**

English will be the principal language of the event, with interpretation into French and Russian in all plenaries and in all workshops.

**Date, location and venue**

06 and 07 November, Torino, Italy, at Lingotto Congress Centre.