

## **Report on a framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area**

### **EURASHE observations**

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EURASHE welcomes the excellent report on the Framework for Qualifications of the European Area.

The Three Cycles in Higher Education are well integrated in the process of creating a European Higher Education Area and the current challenges these Three Cycles are facing nowadays are clearly explained..

EURASHE highly values the introduction of Short Cycle Education in this framework since a continuum in Higher Education will now be created.

This integration will broaden the spectrum of European Higher Education.

Different qualifications tracks are now represented and students enrolling in Higher Education with a more professional or vocational background will have the possibility to be integrated in the system and so there will be an acknowledgment of their competences.

We especially appreciate the emphasis on the following point: “National & European Frameworks should provide various transition points to facilitate access for non-traditional learners and thus promote greater social cohesion and strengthen the social dimension”.

We would like to stress the importance of the social dimension of this process. Enabling students to have access to Higher Education via Life-Long-Learning and flexible learning paths, gives them the opportunity to reach a degree of excellence which they might otherwise not have acquired.

A shift of *paradigma* is thus occurring. The boundaries between the various learning systems are decreasing and the challenges between the different levels of *Education and training* are changing: increasingly, the focus is put on the individual learners instead of on the institutions or learning systems. Accordingly, acquired competences and learning outcomes are increasingly becoming a priority.

This contributes to create an Open Higher Education Area, including formal, non-formal and even informal learning paths.

With respect to this, EURASHE would like to make two observations:

- The EURASHE member institutions provide a more professionally oriented education at Bachelor's and often at Master's level. Due to its connection to a professional oriented type of education, EURASHE can be linked to a more informal type of training.

With respect to the creation of an Open Higher Education Area, bridges to the VET should certainly be taken into consideration

- We would furthermore like to stress that the creation of a national framework demands the involvement of all stakeholders in the process, in particular policymakers in HE, prospective employers, educational and administrative management & staff and students. To achieve this challenge, an excellent communication will be necessary in a top-down but also bottom-up way between all these stakeholders.