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PRESS RELEASE

FROM NATIONAL TO EUROPEAN – LINKING QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS EFFECTIVELY

The European Qualifications Framework, as proposed by the EU Commission, is expected to provide a common language to describe qualifications. This in turn will help Member States, employers and individuals to compare qualifications across the EU's diverse education and training systems. The success of the European Qualifications Framework very much depends on its relevance and credibility to those involved in education, training and learning. The National Qualifications Framework, recently launched in Malta and modelled on the European Framework, seeks to measure qualifications and levels of education by what a person is capable of doing rather than what he or she would have been taught. A national qualifications framework is a way of showing the relationships between qualifications in a country or education or occupational sector. It is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved. In view of the importance of these developments Forum Malta fl-Ewropa, in collaboration with the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC), yesterday organised a Conference for stakeholders at the Intercontinental Hotel, St Julians.

Addressing a packed hall, Dr Gabriella Pace, Forum Malta fl-Ewropa's CEO, stressed the importance of qualifications for prosperity, both on an individual level as well as for the labour market. Dr Pace reiterated that this ties well with a national qualifications

framework, with particular relevance for lifelong learning as well as employability. These principles should guide individuals when choosing what training to follow so as to ensure that qualifications obtained are recognized locally as well as internationally, with the aim of ensuring further learning as well as better opportunities.

Minister of Education, Youth and Employment, Dr Louis Galea, also stressed that both the National Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework are essential tools for furthering economic growth in the country. Minister Galea reiterated that all those involved in education should come as one, therefore ensuring consensus for the creation and finally the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework.

Minister Galea said that ongoing changes in the education sphere particularly within compulsory education are leading to the reformation of the country's educatianol framework. Emphasis has been given to MCAST and to vocational education. Dr Galea also said that both MCAST as well as the University are planning radical change ahead.

During the Conference, there were different interventions by invited speakers, namely Dr James Calleja and Mr Charles Mizzi, respectively Acting CEO and Chairman of the Malta Qualifications Council, as well as Mr Anthony Degiovanni, Mutual Recognition Coordinator. The three speakers highlighted the importance of good will as well as the creation of a level playing field for all those involved within this field, ensuring prosperity both on an individual level but also for the country's economic growth. Interventions by members on two distinct panels focused on the relevance of the European Qualifications Framework for institutions offering tuitionand on the merging of the European and National Qualifications Framework as a tool to further employability and lifelong learning.

In his closing address Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi, stressed that the European Qualifications Framework, within a local framework is a necessary tool for the enhancement of knowledge, skills and competencies of citizens, as well as a means of sustaining development within the labour market.

Dr Gonzi stressed that with Malta's accession to the European Union, our country is facing new challenges, which we have learnt how to exploit so as to maximize our economic opportunities. Malta's accession to the European Union is a challenge which

should be perceived as an opportunity by all to better knowledge and skills which should result in better employability as well as enhanced quality to our standard of living. Dr Gonzi said that the European Qualifications Framework will ensure recognition of each individuals knowledge, skills and competencies, henceforth ensuring better opportunities both for the individual but also for the country as a whole.

While praising the initiative of Forum Malta fl-Ewropa and the Malta Qualifications Council, Dr Gonzi encouraged stakeholders, particularly employers, Trade Unions, Public Officials engaged in human resources, representatives from educational institutions, and other associations and organisations representing professions and other sectoral interests, to support this initiative, because it is only through mutual consent that a competitive spirit can be instilled as well as ensuring that individuals have adequate qualifications.

Discussions with regards to the National Qualifications Framework will be underway up to April of next year, while it is aimed that the whole process will be concluding by mid-year.

[end]

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STQARRIJA GHALL-ISTAMPA

IL-KWALIFIKI …KISBA TA' GĦERF, ĦILIET U KOMPETENZI GĦALL-IŻVILUPP PERSONALI U PROFESSJONALI.

Fl-isfond ta' żvilupp interessanti ferm fil-qasam ta' l-edukazzjoni, kemm dik obbligatorja kif ukoll fis-settur privat b'aktar istituzzjonijiet joffru edukazzjoni u taħriġ f'livelli differenti anke bi sħubija ma' istituzzjonijiet ta' fama internazzjonal, il-Forum Malta fl-Ewropa b' kollaborazzjoni mal-Kunsill Nazzjonali għall-Kwalifiki, organizza konferenza proprju dwar it-tagħqid effetiv tal-Qafas Nazzjonali għall-Kwalifiki ma' dak Ewropew. Dan kollu fid-dawl ta' kif qiegħed jiġi propost mill-Kummissjoni ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea sabiex l-Istati Membri ta' l-Unjoni Ewropea jaddottaw lingwaġġ komuni biex jiddeskrivu il-kwalifiki.

Dan il-Qafas Nazzjonali għall-Kwalifiki, imniedi f'Malta fil-bidu ta' Novembru u mfassal fuq il-Qafas Ewropew, għandu l-għan li jevalwa l-kwalifiki u l-livelli ta' l-edukazzjoni billi jħares lejn dak li l-persuna għandha l-ħila tagħmel u dak li hi kienet kapaċi titghallem.Ser ikun qed jirrikonoxxi t-tagħlim fromali, informali kif ukoll dak mhux formali.

Fid-diskors tal-ftuħ tagħha, il-Kap Eżekuttiv tal-Forum Malta fl-Ewropa, Dr Gabriella Pace, saħqet fuq l-importanza tal-kwalifiki għall-prosperita` kemm ta' individwi kif ukoll għas-suq tax-xogħol. Dan kollu, kompliet tgħid Dr Pace, jorbot mal-principju li l-qafas nazzjonali tal-kwalifiki huwa ta' relevanza ghat-tagħlim tul il-ħajja kif ukoll għal impjegabilita`. Dawn il-prinċipji għandhom jgħinu lill-individwu sabiex jagħzel kwalifiki li

huma rikonoxxuti fuq livell nazzjonali kif ukoll dak internazzjonali, u li jistgħu jwasslu għal aktar taħriġ u għal opportunitajiet għal ħajja aħjar.

Il-Ministru ta' l-Edukazzjoni Louis Galea qal li l-Qafas Nazzjonali tal-Kwalifiki u l-Qafas Ewropew huma għodod essenzjali għall-iżvilupp tal-pajjiż. Hu qal li dawk kollha involuti fil-qasam ta' l-edukazzjoni u t-taħriġ għandhom jaħdmu lejn dan il-qafas u biex ilkoll ninfilzaw f'dan il-qafas komuni. Il-Ministru Galea qal li jifhem li kull organizzazzjoni għandha l-partikolaritajiet tagħha u li kollha għandhom storja u proċeduri differenti ta' kif jaħdmu, izda madankollhu ma naslux jekk ma niġbdux ilkoll ħabel wieħed.

Il-Ministru Galea kompla jgħid li fl-aħħar żmienijiet sar ħafna xogħol fuq il-qasam ta' l-edukazzjoni obbligatorja li qed iwassal għal riforma jew aħjar għal evoluzzjoni tas-settur edukattiv f'pajjiżna. Saret emfasi qawwija wkoll fuq l-MCAST u t-taħriġ vokazzjonali u issa kemm l-MCAST kif ukoll l-Università qed jaraw kif se jkomplu jiżviluppaw għas-snin li ġejjin.

Waqt din il-Konferenza li saret fil-lukanda Intercontinental, kien hemm diversi interventi kemm mill-kelliema mistiedna, fosthom Dr James Calleja, Aġent Kap Eżekutiv tal-Kunsill Malti għall-Kwalifiki, is-Sur Anthony Degiovanni u s-Sur Charles Mizzi, li qablu li b'impenn u r-rieda ta' kulħadd jista' jinħoloq *level playing field* f'dan is-settur biex b' hekk ma jibbenefikax biss l-individwu iżda anke tissaħħaħ l-ekonomija ta' pajjiżna. Waqt il-Konferenza kien hemm ukoll zewg panels bil-partecipazzjoni ta' diversi kelliema. L-ewwel wiehed iffoka fuq ir-rilevanza tal-Qafas Ewropew ghall-Kwalifiki ghal min joffri t-tahrig u ghall-individwi. It-tieni wiehed iddiskuta l-oqfsa tal-kwalifiki u kif jistghu jwasslu ghal opportunitajiet ta' xoghol u aktar tahrig.

Il-Prim Ministru Dr Lawrence Gonzi, fl-indirizz ta' l-għeluq tiegħu, ukoll saħaq li l-Qafas Ewropew tal-Kwalifiki, fil-kuntest nazzjonali tal-Kwalifiki, huwa strument biex pajjiżna jkompli jiżviluppa l-għerf, il-ħiliet u l-kompetenzi tal-poplu Malti u Għawdxi, kif ukoll bħala għodda sostenibbli għax-xogħol u għall-iżvilupp.

Dr Gonzi tenna li bid-dħul ta' Malta fl-Unjoni Ewropea inħolqot sfida ġdida għal pajjiżna, fejn il-poplu Malti għaraf jisfrutta l-identità ekonomika ġdida tiegħu f'livell aħjar ta' għixien. Il-Prim Ministru qal li din hija sfida li trid tinbidel f'opportunità biex l-għerf u l-ħiliet

tagħna jissarrfu f'aktar xogħol u aktar titjib fil-kwalità tal-ħajja ta' kull individwu, u għalhekk il-Qafas Ewropew tal-Kwalifiki huwa wieħed mill-ħafna opportunitajiet li l-Unjoni Ewropea qed tagħti lill-Membri tagħha. Iżda biex dan iseħħ, hemm bżonn ta' għarfien fuq skala Ewropea ta' dak l-għerf, ħiliet u kompetenzi li kull ċittadin għandu jkollu aċċess għalihom.

Dr Gonzi kompla jgħid li l-Gvern qed jagħti l-appoġġ sħiħ tiegħu għal din l-inizjattiva li ħa l-Kunsill Malti għall-Kwalifiki, filwaq li rringrazzja lill-Forum Malta fl-Ewropa ta' l-inizjattiva li ha sabiex proprju jghin fil-proċess ta' konsultazzjoni. Huwa ħeġġeġ lill-*istakeholders* kollha partikularment dawk li jħaddmu, it-*Trade Unions*, l-Uffiċjali tal-Gvern fl-oqsma tar-riżorsi umani, ir-rappreżentanti ta' l-iskejjel u l-istituti edukattivi, persuni involuti fit-taħriġ, assoċjazzjonijiet u organizzazzjonijiet li jirrappreżentaw il-professjonijiet u l-interessi settorjali kif ukoll il-Korpi Kostitwiti, l-istudenti, l-organizzazzjonijet taż-żgħażagħ u l-ġenituri biex jagħtu l-opinjoni u l-appoġġ tagħhom, għaliex huwa permezz ta' dan li aktar nies jagħrfu l-bżonn li biex pajjiż ikun kompetittiv irid ikollu popolazzjoni li taħdem u li jkollha kwalifiki f'wieħed jew aktar mill-livelli fil-Qafas Nazzjonali tal-Kwalifiki.

Id-diskussjoni dwar il-Qafas Nazzjonali ghall-Kwalifiki se tkompli sa April li ġej biex il-qafas ikun lest sa nofs is-sena d-dieħla.

[tmiem]

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