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## 1. ECQA Background

**ECQA (European Certification and Qualification Association)** is the result of a series of EU funded projects from 2005 – 2012. This included European projects such as EQN (European Quality Network, 2005 – 2007), EU Certificates Campus (2008 – 2009) and DEUCERT (Dissemination of EU Certification), the ECQA nowadays acts as an organization that is independent from funding. The members of ECQA are widely spread all over Europe and vary from universities to companies as well as individuals.

ECQA has been nominated as a best practice of the LLP program, **and was published in the brochure Good practice KA 4.:**

On the EU web site:

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results\\_projects/projects\\_by\\_theme\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/projects_by_theme_en.php)

and it was sent to all National agencies of the Erasmus+ programme:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/national\\_agencies\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/national_agencies_en.htm)

## 2. ECQA Social Strategy

**In Europe we experience a growing unemployment and the old conventional schema** to solve this problem seem to fail. People get unemployed, and chambers of labour and commerce retrain people, and unfortunately a too low rate of these people enter a job again, especially if they are above 50.

<http://oesterreich.orf.at/stories/2666058/>

Recent articles in newspapers even outline that the retraining is not focussed enough to really upgrade to the necessary skills (**e.g. increasing unemployment above 50, see Austrian news** (<http://oesterreich.orf.at/stories/2666058/>)).

The question is if we do need in Europe a complementary strategy which even would avoid unemployment before it happens and fights the root cause of the problem. For this reason the ECQA strategy was founded.

**ECQA is aimed at a demographic problem of education and training** in the European Union. For people at 40 – 50 it is many years ago that they attended the university and required skills nowadays

are changing every 2-3 years. This means that their skills get outdated and we experience in Europe a growing unemployment from the age of 45 upwards. Universities in Europe are currently not addressing this problem.

The social chambers are not addressing this problem either because they only react after a person has already been put into unemployment.

### 2.1 The ECQA Concept Addressing the Demographic Problem

EQN developed a so called **role based qualification concept** where e.g. an existing software engineer (who studied informatics some 15 years ago) can identify job roles to upgrade so that he remains a value for the organization. He might receive additional industry qualification for e.g. a safety architect (additionally learning how to enrich existing software architecture with functional safety aspects). This way the person, would for instance, grow into a safety architect position and a younger person who knows more about new programming techniques gets his old position. EQN then developed certification mechanisms for this role based approach for university and industry educational partnerships.

**EU Cert Campus** collected about 15 job roles, structured the corresponding skills sets and established online services. The **online services comprise skills browsing, skills assessment, and online training**. So people from industry can attend job role based qualification training from the work place.

DEUCERT established **ambassadors for this new job role based qualification concept Europe and worldwide**. DEUCERT also helped to create a critical mass of partners. At the moment we do have 26 job professions (ready and in progress) that are certified all over Europe and already outside of the European Union. The concept is meanwhile supported by approx. 60 universities and training bodies in Europe.

Human resource managers from leading multinational companies called ECQA “a success story” because so far the universities in Europe do not address the mentioned demographic problem and ECQA has already achieved more than 11000 online trainings and more than 10000 certificates in European industry and at university PhD programs.

## 3. ECQA White Papers & References

A first paper addressing the demographic problem and offering a solution by the ECQA approach was published by the IEEE (largest publisher of the world, conference in Spain hosted by United nations university) in July 2012.

The paper is attached as “Europe wide Industry Certification Using Standard Procedures based on ISO 17024”, see attached file IEEE-paper-ECQA-2012.pdf.

A further paper was published as a joined paper of the EuroSPI community ([www.eurospi.net](http://www.eurospi.net), <http://2014.eurospi.net>) in the technical proceedings, June 2014.

The paper is attached as “European Certification and Qualification Association - Developments in Europe and World Wide”, see attached file EuroSPI-paper-ECQA-2014.pdf.