



June 2026 – Newsletter 2

Strengthening EQF Level 5 in the Western Balkans

Focus Groups Provide Valuable Insights

As part of the project's analytical phase, partners have successfully organised **eight national focus groups** across BiH, Montenegro and Albania. Four focus groups were organised with **VET experts**, bringing together representatives of vocational education institutions, ministries, agencies and qualification experts. An additional **four focus groups involved employers from the tourism sector**, ensuring that labour market needs and business perspectives are fully reflected in the project outcomes.

The discussions focused on the current state of EQF Level 5 qualifications, existing gaps in national qualification frameworks, skills needs within the tourism sector and opportunities for developing qualifications that better respond to labour market demands. Participants also discussed the importance of stronger cooperation between education providers and employers, work-based learning, digital and green skills, and the role of Level 5 qualifications in supporting career progression and lifelong learning.



The outcomes of these consultations provide valuable evidence for the ongoing national analyses and will directly contribute to the development of project recommendations and future capacity-building activities.

Learning from the Italian Experience

On 9–10 June 2026, project partners together with representatives of ministries, national agencies, VE schools and other key stakeholders from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania met in Bologna, Italy, for a study visit hosted by IFOA. The visit provided an opportunity to explore how EQF Level 5 qualifications are designed, implemented and governed within the Italian VET system. Participants visited the Emilia-Romagna Regional Authority, where they gained insights into regional governance of vocational education, quality assurance mechanisms and cooperation between public authorities, education providers and employers. The programme also included a visit to ITS Academy Adriano



Olivetti, where partners learned about the organisation of Level 5 programmes, curriculum design, work-based learning and the strong involvement of industry in programme delivery. Alongside the study visits, project partners participated in interactive workshops dedicated to comparing the current situation of EQF Level 5 qualifications in the partner countries and allowing an exchange of experiences with Croatian and Italian partners.

National Analyses Under Preparation

Building on the results of focus groups and stakeholder consultations, project partners are currently preparing national analyses that will provide an overview of the current state of EQF Level 5 qualifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. The analyses will identify existing practices, challenges and opportunities for further development, while also supporting future policy recommendations and capacity-building activities



Interested in the future of EQF Level 5 qualifications in the Western Balkans?

Follow [EDU5WB Facebook page](#) for the latest project news, results and opportunities for collaboration. Together, we are shaping innovative pathways for skills development and lifelong learning.

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