**20/11/2024**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**COCEMFE (Spain) and VOLABO (Italy) win the European Quality Award in Validation of Learning Outcomes from Volunteering 2024**

On 19 November 2024, the heart of Europe – Brussels, Belgium – hosted the European Quality Award in Validation of Learning Outcomes from Volunteering, a highlight of the eQval project. Originally planned to honor a single organization, this year’s award resulted in an extraordinary outcome: COCEMFE (Spain) and VOLABO (Italy) were both recognized as winners for their exceptional contributions to the field.

This award celebrates organizations that have excelled in developing and implementing innovative practices for validating learning outcomes acquired through volunteering. The recognition of two winners underscores the remarkable quality and impact of their respective efforts in advancing these processes.

The award ceremony, held in Brussels, brought together representatives from voluntary organizations, education providers, policymakers, and stakeholders across Europe. The awards were presented by Koen Nomden, Team Leader for Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications at the European Commission, who emphasized the significance of these initiatives in fostering skills development and lifelong learning.

The eQval project team expresses its deep appreciation to all the organizations that applied for the award. The applications highlighted the exceptional creativity and commitment of organizations across Europe in validating the transformative skills gained through volunteering. While only one winner was initially planned, the outstanding submissions from COCEMFE and VOLABO inspired the decision to recognize both organizations.

The eQval project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, aims to establish and promote the European Quality Standards in Validation of Learning from Volunteering. These standards provide a robust framework to ensure transparency, inclusivity, and credibility in recognizing the skills and competences gained through volunteering. The European Quality Award in Validation of Learning from Volunteering was organized within the framework of the eQval project as a key initiative to raise awareness of these standards and encourage their adoption across the EU. By showcasing best practices and recognizing exemplary organizations, the award serves as a platform to inspire and support stakeholders in implementing high-quality validation processes that empower volunteers and enhance their opportunities for personal, educational, and professional growth.

The eQval project is an initiative of the Spanish Volunteer Platform (Spain) in collaboration with: CESUR (Spain), Munster Technological University (Ireland), Centre for European Volunteering (Belgium), CSVnet (Italy), the Portuguese Volunteer Confederation (Portugal), and Psitest (Romania).

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Note: The eQval project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The content of this press release is the sole responsibility of the project partners.