EWF celebrates its 30th Anniversary during 2022

During this year, we will share some of the most important moments that marked the history of EWF so far.

It all began in 1992 when EWF started with the Guidelines for European Welding Engineer, Technologist and Specialist approved and the First Authorised National Bodies – ANB was approved for Portugal, followed by Spain and the UK.

Shortly thereafter, EWF began to grow in number of member countries and diplomas issued.
EWF developed a **harmonized system for the certification of companies** that use welding as their main manufacturing process. EWF also embraced several projects that challenged its comfort zone, such as **Weld-On** - The first cooperation project approved under the Leonardo da Vinci programme.
Beginning the new century, EWF licenses the **EWF Training, Qualification and Certification System for Welding Personnel** to IIW (International Institute of Welding). IIW establishes the International Authorization Board to manage the IIW/EWF Combined system. The first International ANBs are approved in **China, Japan,** and **Australia**. EWF also starts its collaboration with the European Union with projects such as **Euroweld**, **Continued** and **Netframe**.
EWF becomes an **EA-European Cooperation for Accreditation Recognized Stakeholder**.

In 2016, EWF started to adventure beyond welding, joining, and cutting, and started with the development of **Additive Manufacturing Qualifications**. EWF already provided training guidelines that cover all professional levels in welding technology and related areas, such as Thermal Spraying, Adhesive Bonding, Plastics Welding and Underwater Welding
Some of the initial projects that supported Additive Manufacturing were, ADMIRE, CLLAIM, OPENHYBRID, LASIMM. Which intended to establish a stable relationship among enterprises working in the Additive Manufacturing (AM) supply chain, research centers and universities. To creating a European Additive Manufacturing qualification body and designing a European harmonised qualification system and particular qualifications matching market requirements, and an all-in-one hybrid additive and subtractive multi-tool platform using directed energy deposition additive manufacturing capable of producing large, high volume and complex components without the need for materials handling or post-processing enabling fully finished components to be produced. which culminated in the world's largest metal 3D printer, capable of producing quality assured finished components directly from a CAD drawing. Respectively.

Sooner we expanded with one of the biggest European projects dealing with **skills for AM the Sector Skills Strategy in Additive Manufacturing (SAM) project** – that supported the development and implementation of the **International Additive Manufacturing Qualification System - IAMQS**.

However, Additive Manufacturing was just an initial step in the overall **EWF strategy that aims at supporting the Manufacturing Industry in Qualifying and Training the necessary professionals**. Currently, EWF collaborates and supports a wide range of manufacturing sectors, such as the **defense** and **aerospace** sectors, but also a wider range of manufacturing companies in the implementation of a range of technologies, such as **AI** and **Circular Economy** in manufacturing, by developing and deploying at an international level the needed training and qualifications.

What impelled the creation of EWF?

Rute Ferraz, chief executive of EWF tells us how it all started.

• Did the creation of the European Union provide or motivated the creation of the EWF?

EU was created in 93 and has its origins in the European Community of Coal and Steel and in the European Economic Community created in 1957. EWF was created in 92. However, the catalyst for the creation of the EWF was the need felt by European metalworking companies to have competent technicians for the manufacturing process, welding / bonding technology. This manufacturing process is a special process that must be very well controlled throughout the entire manufacturing process to ensure product quality and not lead to waste. It depends on the competences of the operators / technicians / coordinators at different levels and on the control of processing parameters to obtain the products with the required quality.

The training available at the time was scarce, insufficient, almost all implemented by welding equipment manufacturers. Welding institutes in some European countries, Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, UK, through their network of industrial members, identified this need to develop a personnel qualification system, at different levels, from Engineer to Welder, in the field of Welding and that it be harmonized in its implementation in Europe. This is how it came about the initiative of the welding institutes of the countries mentioned above, of creating the EWF with this priority objective to respond to a need of the metal-mechanical industry that uses the welding process.

However, it is important to point out that, despite the fact that EWF is a European organization with a European scope, EWF currently is an international organization that addresses, with the support of its partners, training and qualification of manufacturing personnel at the international level.

• With the new rules on the movement of goods, services, and people, was this the "perfect" year to start EWF?

The fact that the system is harmonized and has mutual recognition between several European countries, catalyzes the free movement of people in that space. Thus, very much aligned with the strategic objectives of the just created European Union.

• Was free movement and the fact that young people increasingly study abroad a further factor in harmonizing qualifications?

It was not the cause, but the development and implementation of the EWF Harmonized System for Qualification and Certification of Personnel in Manufacturing is undoubtedly a catalyst for free movement and is prepared to allow access for those who comply with the entry requirements regardless of their geographic location.