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Key Activity 1 project EQF and compatibility of sectoral qualifications between the countries / SECCOMPAT

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Rationale of the project

The project addresses **the problem** of the matching between the sectoral qualifications, national qualifications frameworks in the EU countries (in the context of the current development of the national qualifications frameworks) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).



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Aim of the project

The aim of the project is to develop the guidelines and methodical recommendations for the matching of sectoral qualifications between the countries using the links of these qualifications to the National qualifications frameworks and EQF.



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Objectives of the project (1)

- to analyze the structure of the qualifications in the construction and hospitality sectors of partners countries, comparing the sectoral qualifications to the EQF,
- to analyze the compatibility of the qualifications in these sectors with the national qualifications frameworks of the countries and via the structure of the national qualifications frameworks – to the EQF;



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Objectives of the project (2)

- to explain the role of the national qualifications frameworks and the EQF in ensuring the compatibility of the sectoral qualifications between the countries,
- to propose the related recommendations for the experts and decision makers in the field of qualifications.



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Partners of the project

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Results / products of project (1)

- Guidelines for the Application of National Qualifications Frameworks and the European Qualifications Framework in Comparison of Sectoral Qualifications between Countries
- Report of the comparative research “Comparability of the Structure of Qualifications in the Sectors of Construction and Hospitality in Austria, Czech Republic, France, Ireland and Lithuania”



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Results / products of project (2)

- Report of the research “Referencing of Sectoral Qualifications of Construction and Hospitality Sectors to the established or currently designed National Qualifications Frameworks of Austria, Czech Republic, France, Ireland and Lithuania and referencing of these NQFs to the EQF”
- Report of research “Comparison of the Contents of Sectoral Qualifications from the Construction and Hospitality Sectors applying the Structure of EQF Descriptors”



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Dimensions of the comparison of inter-country comparison of sectoral qualifications

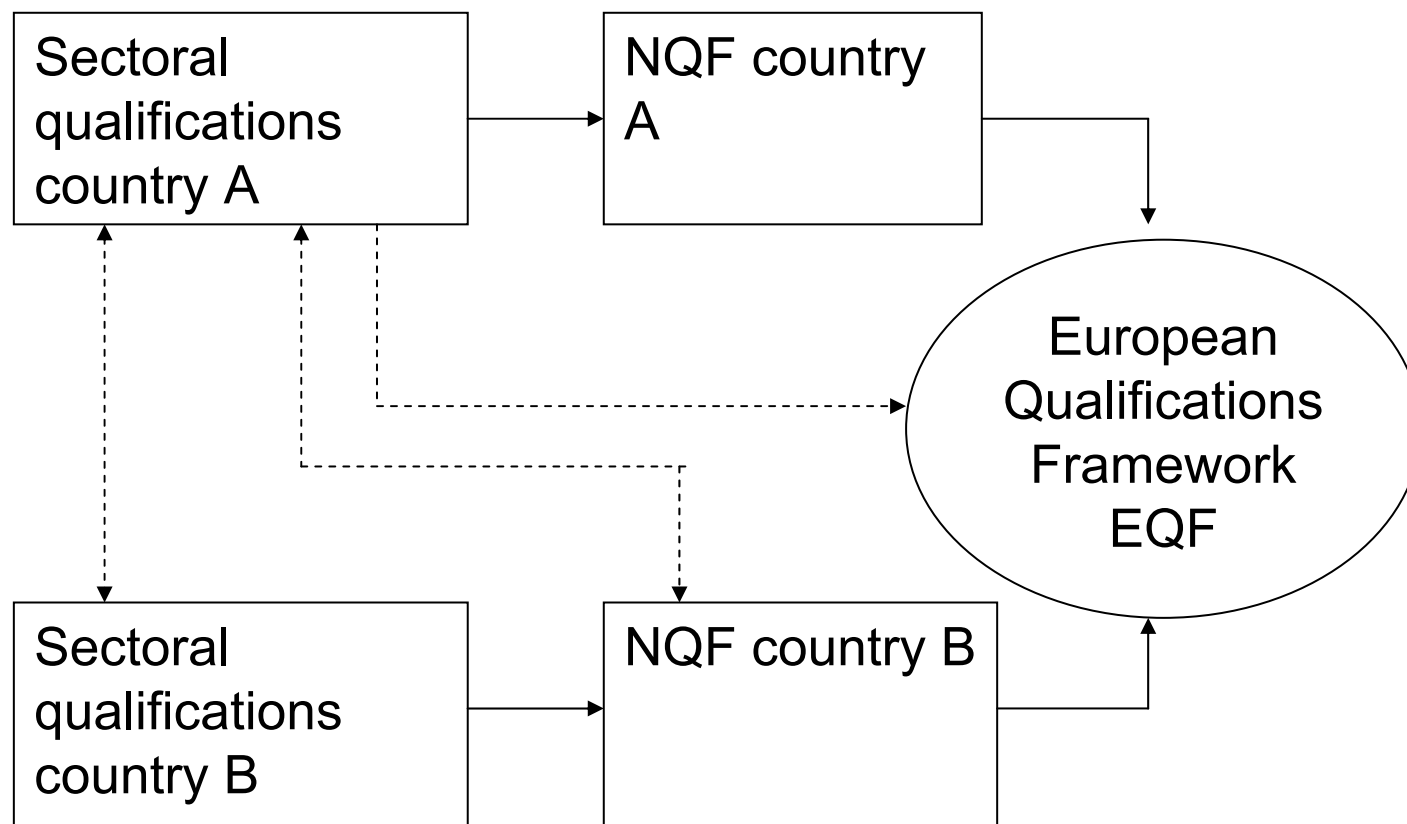
- *structure of the qualifications inside the sectors* (positions of qualifications in the occupational structure of sectors, sectoral hierarchies of qualifications) and
- internal structure of the qualifications in the sector (differences in the composition of qualifications – units of qualifications, competences etc.).



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Scenarios of the comparison of sectoral qualifications between countries





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Direct inter-country comparison of sectoral qualifications

- Direct comparison and compatibility of sectoral qualifications between the different countries without referencing to the NQFs and the EQF.
- In this case of comparison the most important factors are the characteristics of work, typical for the sector and the specificities of the sector in terms of size of enterprises, market niches, work organization and applied technologies, business organisation and human resource management etc.



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Approaches of structuring of qualifications in the sectors

- Occupational approach, when qualifications are grouped according to the occupations, each occupation encompassing certain numbers of levels of qualification, which can be adhered to certain levels of the EQF (Lithuania, France, Czech Republic).
- More levelling oriented approach, when qualifications are grouped according to their belonging to the different qualifications levels in the sector based on the characteristics of performance (Austria),
- Mixed approach which encompass the occupational and level oriented approaches each having similar influence and importance for the structuring of qualifications in the sector (occupations and qualifications related to the management and work organization (supervisors, high technicians and technical executives, draughtsman etc.)



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Comparability of the *maps* of qualifications in the construction sectors of Austria, France and Lithuania (1)

- The maps of qualifications of France and Lithuania are more comparable to each other, than the structure of qualifications of Austria. The possible reason of this situation is that the qualifications in France and Lithuania are grouped in the similar ways – based on the existing occupations in the sector.
- The case of Austria is a little bit different - here the basic reference for the grouping of qualifications is based on the levels of skills and types of the performed activities (unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, specially skilled / auxiliary works, supervision and foreman work).



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Comparability of the *maps* of qualifications in the construction sectors of Austria, France and Lithuania (2)

The main differences and difficulties in comparison of the construction sector qualifications maps appear on the higher level of qualifications. For example, it is rather complicated to find the analogues for the qualifications of the construction engineers and technicians, construction machinery engineers and technicians in Austria (Bauingenieure und Bautechniker, Baumaschineningenieure und Baumaschinentechniker) structures of construction sector qualifications in France and Lithuania.



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Institutional and occupational basements of the differentiation and structuring of sectoral qualifications

- Existing work practices and settings, existing pathways of skills upgrading combined with the structure of the qualifications supplied by the VET and higher education institutions (Lithuania, Czech Republic).
- Collective agreements between the employers and unions of the sector which define the qualifications in the sector and their structuring (Austria, France).



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Criteria for referencing sectoral qualifications to certain levels

Application of the functional, cognitive and general competences and their combinations in the different contexts of activity (Lithuania, Czech Republic).

Credentials acquired in the initial and continuing vocational training or higher education institutions (certificates, diploma). This is especially valid for those sub-sectors and occupations which are traditionally regulated by the state-authorities (safety engineer, architect etc.) (Austria, France).

Credentials and the practice in the execution of activity in the field. This is especially clearly expressed for the higher level qualifications in the construction sector in Austria and France, but also can be noted in other countries (Lithuania, Czech Republic).



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Direct comparison possibilities: conclusion

Complex differences in the socioeconomical and organisational environment of the sectors in the different countries, varieties of sectoral qualifications and their implied challenges in direct comparison of sectoral qualifications between the countries demand for additional measures and instruments which could provide the reference basis for more effective and smooth comparison of sectoral qualifications between the countries.



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Direct referencing of sectoral qualifications to the levels of the EQF

The most important issue in this case is the compatibility of the structure of compared sectoral qualifications with the EQF criteria for the structuring of qualifications into levels.



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Comparison of the contents of sectoral qualifications through the application of EQF descriptors (1):

Illustrated via 2 selected examples from the construction sector from France, Lithuania and Austria:

- First example: comparing qualifications of the supervisor of building site or construction works (EQF levels 4 and 5)
- Second example: comparing qualifications of construction technicians and managers (EQF level 6)



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First example: comparing qualifications of the supervisor of building site or construction works (EQF 4-5) (1)

- The knowledge descriptor list in Austria stresses the skilful applications of the knowledge in the work process, making the underpinning knowledge the basis of the qualification and expertise of the supervisor.
- The skills descriptor of France and Austria are characterised by higher cognitive level, than the skills in the descriptor of foremen of Lithuania (to design the installation of construction site...) ensuring higher autonomy and responsibility of employees. The skills description in the case of Austria is also more holistic (this demonstrates the existence of a clear relationship between the skills and underpinning knowledge).



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First example: comparing qualifications of the supervisor of building site or construction works (EQF 4-5) (2)

- The descriptions of competence in case of France and Lithuania pay more attention to the abilities of communication and cooperation of supervisor, while the description of Austria is more concentrated on the abilities, related to effective individual performance.
- On the whole, in this exemplary case of comparison using the structure of EQF based on the distinction of knowledge, skills and competence, it appears that the learning outcomes of these qualifications can be easily compared.



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Second example: comparing qualifications of construction technicians and managers (EQF level 6) (1)

- The knowledge descriptor for the large scale construction site supervisor (Bauleiter von Grossbaustellen) in case of Austria is very detailed comparing to descriptors of France and Lithuania.
- This is basically due to the fact that in Austria the underpinning knowledge of these qualifications is much more heavily based on knowing, understanding and applying of different standards, norms, legal requirements and other external formal references permitting to act in independent way.



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Second example: comparing qualifications of construction technicians and managers (EQF level 6) (2)

The qualification of the high technician in construction technical-economical engineering (France) includes ability to learn (*ability to regularly update his/her knowledge in accordance with the changes and development of technologies*) which is not explicitly indicated in the descriptors of Austria and Lithuania.



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Direct referencing to the EQF: conclusions

- The structure of the EQF descriptors (knowledge, skills, competence) in principle can be applied for the comparison of sectoral qualifications of different levels.
- The original descriptors of qualifications in many cases describe knowledge, skills and competence in the combined units or combinations. Therefore splitting of these combinations according to the structure of EQF (knowledge, skills and competence) is rather difficult, subjective and questionable.
- Similar problems occurred with the comparison of skills, because sectoral descriptors stress rather different orientations and types of the skills.



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Inter-country comparison of sectoral qualifications through referencing to NQF's and the EQF: conclusions (1)

- There are significant differences in the underlying characteristics and principles of the structuring of qualifications in the sectors and the National Qualifications Frameworks. These differences create difficulties in referencing of sectoral qualifications to the NQF's.
- These differences of the underlying characteristics and principles of the structuring of sectoral qualifications and the NQFs can be partially explained by the different ways of evolution and development of the structuring of qualifications in the sectors and on the national level.



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Inter-country comparison of sectoral qualifications through referencing to NQF's and the EQF: conclusions (2)

The sectoral structuring of qualifications is traditionally more oriented to the demand of skills, while the NQFs are oriented to the supply side – the systems of VET, higher education and continuing training.



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Inter-country comparison of sectoral qualifications through referencing to NQF's and the EQF: conclusions (3)

Referencing of sectoral qualifications to the NQFs and to the EQF in the countries present challenges for the inter-country comparability of sectoral qualifications because of:

- the differences in the underlying characteristics and principles of the structuring of qualifications in the sectors and the National Qualifications Frameworks,
- the differences in the approaches of the NQFs to the sectoral qualifications,
- different levels of involvement of the sectoral stakeholders in the designing of the NQFs and referencing of sectoral qualifications to the NQFs and to the EQF.



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Inter-country comparison of sectoral qualifications through referencing to NQF's and the EQF: conclusions (4)

It is essentially important to be aware about challenges and difficulties for the international comparability of sectoral qualifications by using their references to the NQFs and to the EQF and to seek for the appropriate solutions on how to approach sectoral qualifications and the NQFs in regard to level descriptors, criteria of referencing of qualifications to the levels, as well as in the processes of the awarding and quality assurance of qualifications.



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Thank you for your attention.

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