

*European Qualifications
Framework; situation
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Jens Bjornavold

European centre for development of
vocational training (Cedefop)

Main functions of the EQF

***Translation device
for comparing qualifications***

***Neutral reference point
and a system for
classifying qualifications levels***

MAIN FEATURES OF THE EQF

- 8 levels defined through learning outcomes – knowledge, skills and competence
- EQF has two main aims; to facilitate trans-national mobility and lifelong learning

EQF Level 8

EQF Level 7

EQF Level 6

EQF Level 5

EQF Level 4

EQF Level 3

EQF Level 2

EQF Level 1

State of play; European level

- **Commission; adopted draft Recommendation 5 September 2006**

- **Agreement in COREPER (Committee of Member States Permanent representatives) on EQF text 12 September 2007**
- **Final discussion in Parliament 24 September**

- **Expected adoption by Parliament and Council November 2007**

A key to implementation of the EQF - National Qualifications Framework:

classification of qualifications
to ***levels*** of ***learning achieved***.

for

integration and ***coordination*** of
qualifications systems

***transparency, access, progression and
quality*** of qualifications

National Qualifications Frameworks and National Qualifications Systems

A national qualifications framework is *an optional* part of a National Qualifications System

A national qualifications system embraces all structures and processes leading to the award of a qualification

**NQS; frequently complex, non-transparent and fragmented;
NQF aim at making levels explicit and provide transparency for access, transfer and progress**

Overarching National Qualifications Frameworks in Europe (1)

Existing NQFs: Ireland, UK (England, Scotland and Wales), France, Malta

Commitment and preparation: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey

Consideration: Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania and Sweden

No preparation; Cyprus, Finland, Greece, Iceland

Overarching National Qualifications Frameworks in Europe (2)

All candidate and pre-accession countries are working on NQFs:

Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia

The influence of EQF on developments is clear

2005-2007

EQF as a catalyst for national developments

Clear demand and strong support from Member States

EQF is seen as a relevant tool for cross-border mobility and for pursuing national lifelong learning strategies

EQF - a driver and catalyst for national reform and development of overarching National Qualifications Frameworks

Advantages of the EQF at national level

**Introduces an international reference -
important for individuals, education
and training providers and employers**

**Supporting LLL by integrating separate
education and training systems**

Paves way for credit transfer

**Improves employers ability to judge profile
and relevance of qualifications**

Enables peer learning between countries

The first and critical step; Referring national qualifications levels to the EQF

Countries asked to refer their national qualifications levels to the EQF by 2010

Countries will have to refer their qualifications levels to the EQF through learning outcomes

The principle of 'best fit' - how to make trusted decisions on the placing of national qualification levels

National Qualifications Frameworks outside Europe; situation mid 2007

Existing NQFs: New Zealand, Australia, South Africa

**Emerging NQFs in; Russia, Ukraine, Sri Lanka,
Malaysia, Thailand, Namibia and Botswana**

**International organisations like OECD and ILO are
increasingly focussing on NQF as an instrument for
reform**

Common features in European NQF developments

Learning outcomes are used as a basis for classifying and describing levels

Quality assurance is a major concern

Big majority of countries link NQFs to validation of non-formal learning

Significant number of countries use 8 level structure

A number of countries have established inventories of national qualifications

How to achieve real comparability? The shift to learning outcomes

EQF requires a (re) interpretation of national qualifications levels in terms of learning outcomes

'Window dressing' or a genuine effort to review national qualifications levels?

The shift to learning outcomes requires objectivity and transparency to allow for mutual trust

How to achieve real comparability?

Quality assurance

**A realistic use of learning outcomes
Is a condition for quality and mutual trust!**

**Are existing quality assurance approaches
able to guarantee transparency
and mutual trust?**

How to quality assure

- the referencing of levels
- certification procedures and standards?

Challenge:

EQF as a comprehensive, meta-framework

EQF is a comprehensive meta-framework addressing the links between sub-systems (for example HE and VET)

How to ensure, at European and national level, an integrated LLL approach breaking down barriers between systems

Challenges; Credit transfer, validation and Europass

- **How to integrate credit transfer and EQF**
 - **One integrated European system?**
 - **Why is there a limited development of national credit transfer schemes?**

How can validation of non-formal and informal learning be promoted by the EQF?

Europass; how can it support the EQF?

European support to national implementation

- **EQF pre- Implementation group (32 countries) March 2007**
 - **Following formal adoption of EQF, a European advisory group will be set up**
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- **Cluster on Recognition of learning outcomes; focus on National Qualifications Frameworks and validation**
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- **EQF test and pilot projects; 12 projects launched January 2007**
 - **New call for proposals published 25 May 2007**
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- **Guidelines for implementation being prepared**
 - **EQF implementation conference February 2008**

Testing and implementing the EQF; Call for proposal

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu>

Deadline for applications is 31 August 2007