A European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning

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The European Qualifications Framework

• Cooperation in higher education (Bologna) 1999....

• Cooperation in vocational education and training (Copenhagen) 2001....

• Based on a request of Commission and Council 2004

Recommendation from the Commission 7 September 2006.

Final decision Spring 2007?
Functions of the EQF

Translation device
for comparing qualifications

Neutral reference point
based on
learning outcomes
Our Lifelong Learning Experience: Obstacles!

- within and between countries
- between education and training systems
- to use of acquired skills
A basis for co-operation

- EQF implementation is voluntary
- Entails no legal obligations on Member States or sectors
- *Fosters change* by supporting and informing reform
What EQF is NOT!

- EQF not about replacing national/sectoral frameworks
- EQF not about harmonisation
- EQF CANNOT define new qualifications
• 8 levels covering the entire span of qualifications

• Broadly accepted in the EQF consultation Autumn 2005

• The 8 levels will be used as a neutral reference point by national qualification authorities - and sectoral bodies

• Proposal; from 2011 all new qualifications awarded will be referenced to the EQF...
The Eight EQF Levels

Knowledge

Skills

Competences

Each EQF Reference Level
The core definitions…

**Knowledge:** In the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual

**Skills:** In the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

**Competence:** In the EQF, 'competence' is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.
Focus on Learning Outcomes

EQF

Learning Outcomes

Non-Formal Learning

Formal Learning

Informal Learning
Linking qualifications to the EQF: the role of national authorities

- Requires a commitment to link national qualifications to EQF
- Implies a long term reform process
- Requires a shift towards learning outcome-based qualifications at national level
- Requires the setting up of National Framework of Qualifications
Linking qualifications to the EQF: the role of national authorities

- National qualifications must refer to EQF levels (2011)
- Must be a strong link to quality assurance; necessary to ensure mutual trust
- Transparency of procedures
- National decisions must be published
Linking qualifications to the EQF: the role of sectoral stakeholders

- Sectors have expressed the need for a common reference point
- Focus on an outcomes and competence based approach
- The Recommendation invites sectors to link sectoral qualifications to EQF
The Draft Recommendation endorses...

*The intention to: Support (...) international sectoral organisations in using the reference levels and principles of the European Qualifications Framework as set out in this Recommendation, in particular by facilitating cooperation and testing, and developing support and guidance material;*
Linking qualifications to the EQF: the role of sectoral stakeholders

- Facilitate sector internal competence developments
- Facilitate link between national and sectoral qualifications
- A big interest among international sectoral organisations for the EQF; more than 30 applications for testing 2006/2007....
EQF and sectors, remaining questions:

• Which are the requirements to sectors if they want to use the EQF?

• Who is going to monitor and approve the use of the EQF by sectors?

• What kind of quality assurance frameworks and agreements are necessary?

• How can mutual trust be promoted; between sectors and national authorities; towards citizens?