




kwalfikacje dla każdego

Revision of the European Qualifications Framework: Lessons from research and national experiences

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European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- translation tool that helps **communication and comparison** between qualifications systems in Europe
- eight common European reference levels are described in terms of **learning outcomes**: knowledge, skills and competences
- allows **national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) in Europe to relate to the EQF**, and through the NQFs, relate qualifications to EQF levels
- learners, graduates, providers and employers can use these levels to **understand and compare qualifications** awarded in different countries and by different education and training systems



The New Skills Agenda for Europe – the benefits of the EQF

The main strands of the New Skills Agenda

1. Improving the quality and relevance of skills formation
 - EQF helps to improve link between the labour market needs and skills development,
 - Focus on learning outcomes which provide a reference for skills demand and supply
 - Improving quality: quality assurance in qualifications system
 - Support of learner-centred teaching and training practices
2. Making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable
 - EQF primary purpose is to enhance comparability and visibility of qualifications in Europe
3. Improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices
 - Information on available qualifications through national registers
 - Additional tools providing information on the potential qualifications that can be acquired



State of the EQF in the EU

- ❑ EQF is a significant catalyst for the NQFs development, by early 2016:
 - 22 Member States and 5 non-Member States finalised referencing process; 6 countries are planning to finalise it by the end of 2016;
 - 15 countries are putting NQF levels on certificates and diplomas
 - 39 European countries develop 43 NQFs, 34 countries have comprehensive frameworks, 4 – covering limited range of qualification types
 - 18 countries reached operational stage
- ❑ In some countries the EQF enhanced significant policy learning, some followed „easy” path of policy borrowing
- ❑ In the past 8 years there is visible improvement in the quality of the policy process related to referencing process and NQFs development
- ❑ In some countries NQFs are an important stimulus of national reforms – the „reforming frameworks”



Benefits from the EQF implementation

- ❑ relevant for strengthening lifelong and life-wide learning policies and practices
- ❑ tools for increasing permeability of education and training systems
- ❑ potentially reducing barriers to access and progression in education, training and learning
- ❑ tool for strengthening cooperation between stakeholders
- ❑ improving esteem of the vocational education and training
- ❑ better monitoring of the supply and demand of qualifications



Challenges in the EQF implementation in the light of the proposed recommendation

- ☐ Not all countries have referenced their entire qualifications system to the EQF
- ☐ There are substantial country variations in the description of similar qualifications
- ☐ The term 'competences' in the EQF third column is limited to mean 'autonomy and responsibility'
- ☐ Need to develop trust in the quality and assigned level of qualifications
- ☐ No common arrangements for credit transfer and accumulation for qualifications
- ☐ Increasing number of international (sectoral) qualifications
- ☐ Need to enhance development common training frameworks based on EQF levels
- ☐ No defined relationship between EQF and NQFs in third countries
- ☐ Governance of the EQF and other European tools such as Europass and ESCO



EQF revision: issues and challenges

- Narrowing the third column to „responsibility and autonomy” may not cover the scope of the descriptors in some NQFs
 - social competences related to group co-operation
 - identity
- Differences in the national scope and design of the NQFs are significant and explained by divergent national developments
 - Recommending common principles for quality assurance, credit transfer and levelling method may be difficult given these diversities
 - Proposed principles were not agreed in the existing EQF governance structure, including the Advisory Group
 - There is a need to see the impact of the recommendation in the comprehensive frameworks, including formal education
 - Increased need for resources (cost and time) on the national level



EQF revision: issues and challenges

- Qualifications are linked to national frameworks, current practice is to indicate national levels on qualifications
 - Principle of linking qualifications only to the national frameworks should be maintained
 - In the case of international qualifications – important to further seek solutions, based on common agreement: continuation the work done by the EQF AG subgroup on international qualifications
- Strengthening of the national implementation of the recommendation requires explanation and should respect the subsidiarity principle
- EQF governance: important to learn from achievements and challenges
 - EQF AG work is evaluated as efficient and recognised by many stakeholders
 - Peer-learning and other exercises monitored by the AG (international qualifications, horizontal comparisons) add value to the EQF development



Conclusions

EQF should be a tool enhancing policy learning process, following the approach of the open method of coordination

New dynamic in the process of the EQF implementation is welcomed, but risk of policy borrowing should be avoided

NQFs should be based on the institutional logics that exist in the countries

EQF should maintain its role as a tool of open method of co-ordination: national systems should be reviewed in the light of commonly agreed principles rather than comply with them

The NQFs and the EQF should be „dynamic oriented policy tool with vision” that feed into the New Skills Agenda for Europe