

Public consultation on a “European Area of Skills and Qualifications”

Position paper of FINLAND

Finland welcomes the public consultation organized by the European Commission on a possible “European Area of Skills and Qualifications”. Referring to the background paper of the public consultation, Finland would like to express preliminary opinions on the Commission initiative that is under consultation.

Finland supports the view of the Commission on placing a stronger focus on the learners and on helping Member States and educational institutions in enhancing the focus on learning outcomes. We also recall the necessity of developing and enabling flexible and individually adjustable learning pathways. Constant development of educational systems is of utmost importance on both national and EU levels. The cooperation with third countries also needs to be considered with this regard.

During the last decade several European instruments have been put in place to facilitate the transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications. Some of these instruments, like the Bologna process, have been developed via means of intergovernmental cooperation, and thus conduct their activities under the principle of autonomy of the higher education institutions. Due to the diversity of the instruments, effective methods of communication and information should be further developed. Aim should be to make the European instruments more accessible and understandable to the learners, citizens and all relevant stakeholders acting in the field of education.

Finland considers that the ongoing thorough evaluation of the current instruments should have a crucial role in preparing any changes to the current transparency tools and recognition systems. The implementation of the current instruments requires perseverance and long-term commitment. Aiming to ensure durable and reasonable implementation results in the Member States, a proper implementation of the current instruments should be ensured before any conclusions can be made on the future development needs. The implementation delays in the Member States are regrettable, but implementation measures must not be hastened. The reasons behind the delays should also be considered carefully in relation to the national situations in the Member States.

Commission proposal regarding the European Area of Skills and Qualifications should continue to remain under the legal basis of the TFEU 165 and 166. It is of utmost importance, that the role of the Education Council will remain as the main decision-making and policy developing body in the EU education policy. Finland does not see any need for adjustments or changes of the legal base in the field of education policies. The EASQ should not create any further administrative burdens, structures nor reporting procedures to the Member States.

