

Initial Polish comments on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The rationale of EQF

The presented Project is in the line with the premises set out in the consultations document.

EQF can serve as a tool which facilitates the recognition of qualifications acquired in the formal, non-formal and informal education in different systems and areas. Such a framework in consequence supports geographic, professional and educational mobility (including bridges between general and vocational education). It can have also a positive impact on social mobility and the access to higher levels of education and training, also by supporting the identification and recognition of skills acquired outside the formal education system (for instance at work or on a voluntary basis). It is feasible provided that each EU Member State develops its own National Qualifications Framework and specifies how it reflects the principles of the EQF.

By direct references to the directive relating to the recognition of professional qualifications, EQF contributes also to making the qualifications acquired in the EU Member States more transparent. It is supposed to facilitate their assessment by the relevant bodies in the framework of the so called general system. However, it is necessary to emphasize that the directives relating to the recognition of professional qualifications determine in their own way qualifications levels, whereas each EU member state is obliged to implement Community Acts to its legal system (contrary to the optional and ancillary EQF).

We suggest that you integrate the provisions of *A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* into EQF.

The reference levels and descriptors

The descriptors' generality facilitates classifying most of education and training forms. More detailed commentaries on translating Polish qualifications to EQF levels will be submitted after commissioning additional studies.

Poland has no National Qualifications Framework. The difficulty in assessing EQF usefulness in relation to Polish qualifications is caused by different approach to student evaluation in Poland.

EQF classifies individuals on the basis of learning outcomes. It considers not only knowledge and skills (carrying out tasks at different difficulty level), but also other key competences essential for LLL (adjusted to the reference level), so called personal and professional competences (communication, responsibility, initiative and autonomy, strategic approach).

Such a concept means introducing a new approach to the Polish theory and practice in education and training. It would require introducing changes to the education and training contents, in particular to assessment and examination standards, teacher and trainer training standards.

The formal system (school) could be easily translated into the reference structure (references to the educational attainment). However, matching the qualifications acquired in the informal system with the reference structure is a much more difficult task. Introducing the National Qualifications Framework to Poland will require many efforts due to a high number of qualifications, as well as the lack of a transparent system relating to the recognition of prior learning.

The EQF descriptions of competences will contribute to the development of education standards relating to the particular fields of higher education studies in Poland.

National Qualifications Frameworks

Poland is preparing to undertake works on the National Qualifications Frameworks and the National Qualification System. The National Reform Program 2005-2008 provides for these tasks. The implementation phase begins this year and will take 2 years.

Sectoral Qualifications

At sector level, EQF will allow to compare more adequately sector qualifications acquired in different education and training forms and in different countries.

EQF will contribute to the non-formal education development. The changes should be introduced in cooperation with all the stakeholders.

We will provide more detailed commentaries after commissioning more detailed studies and carrying out consultations.

Mutual trust

EQF will contribute to mutual trust between all European partners at different levels (European-national-sector-local) provided that National Qualifications Frameworks with their references to EQF are developed according to clear principles and in cooperation with all the stakeholders.

We find that arranging workshops or expert cooperation so as to exchange views would be purposeful considering different stages as to the NQF in EU Member States.

Poland would be interested in participating in such activities as a learning partner.

At present, we are submitting our initial commentaries. Poland will be submitting further commentaries throughout the process.