Brussels, 1 March 2017

DRAFT MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND ACTION POINTS
OF THE THIRTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE EQF ADVISORY GROUP
BRUSSELS, 8-9 FEBRUARY 2017

The EQF referencing process

Referencing reports:
- CY presented a detailed roadmap on planned measures for implementation of the national qualification framework. Through this detailed roadmap CY is the 31st country having referenced to the EQF.

Action points:
- CY is invited to present an update on the implementation of the referencing in late 2018.
- TK is scheduled to present its referencing report at the EQF AG meeting of 28-30 March 2017. The report was sent to the Commission and will be sent out to EQF AG members during the month of February.
- SK will address its pending issues at the EQF AG meeting of 28-30 March 2017. The report and information on pending issues should be sent to the Commission by 28 February.
- IS is scheduled to present an update of the referencing report at the EQF AG meeting on 13-15 June 2017. The report should be sent to the Commission by 13 May.

Referencing process: working method + information
- COM presented note 39-2 on overview of national development on the implementation of EQF and urged countries to send missing referencing reports and information for the comparison function of the portal.
- COM opened an initial discussion on a revised working method of the EQF AG in the context of referencing. COM suggested to shift the focus on practical implementation of the EQF and to reflect upon a stronger and more balanced involvement of the EQF AG members. EQF AG members welcomed the discussion and emphasised the added value of self-assessment.

Action points:
- COM to reflect on a different way of presenting information on the referencing

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1 For overview of referencing planning please see note AG38-2
process in close coordination with Cedefop.
- Members of the EQF AG to send the missing referencing reports and provide requested information for the interactive comparison of qualifications.
- COM to prepare a note on the EQF AG's working method with regard to referencing further to the inputs received during the meeting. COM will circulate the draft note to the EQF AG before its discussion at the EQF AG meeting of 28-30 March 2017.

Working group on horizontal comparisons of levelled qualifications:
- The chair of the HC group summarized the outcome of the HC working group meeting in Warsaw on 13 January and outlined the content of the comments received by member of the EQF AG, explaining that more time is needed to finalize a new version of the report on the bases of these inputs.
- Scotland and SE have been included in the analysis.
- COM stressed that the final report should include strengths and weaknesses of levelling and that the main focus should be on the consistency of the qualifications under analysis. The work is exploratory in nature, and the pilot is testing a method (the fiche) and recommendations on what could be improved should be included.

Action point:
- The HC group to finalise the report further to the comments received and it will be sent to the EQF AG before the end of February in order to be presented at the EQF AG meeting on 28-30 March.

Learning outcomes:
- Cedefop presented the state of play of the draft of the Handbook on learning outcome & feedback.
- Cedefop and UNESCO presented the preliminary observations and conclusions of a combined Cedefop-Unesco-ETF study on learning outcomes. In the context of the study the draft skills and competence terminology (English version) from the ESCO project (European classification of occupations, skills, competences and qualifications) were for the first time used to compare the learning outcomes in different VET qualifications descriptions from more than 20 countries worldwide.

Action points:
- Cedefop to finalize the new draft of the Handbook and circulate it by the end of February 2017 in order to receive feedback and discuss it at the EQF AG on 28-30 March.
- Cedefop to keep the EQF AG updated on the results of the still ongoing comparative study on 26 vocational qualifications worldwide.

National qualification frameworks:
Cedefop presented the preliminary results of the most recent developments with regard to NQFs in Europe in 2016. By the end of 2016 a total of 43 NQFs are under development, 33 countries have formally adopted their framework while 6 are working on formal adoption. The EQF recommendation of 2008 has spurred this process. 35 countries are working toward comprehensive NQFs addressing all levels and types of qualifications from formal education and training system (VET, HE, general education). Countries are at different stages in realising this objective. In some countries NQFs have been designed
as comprehensive frameworks, but currently do not cover general education qualifications yet. Other frameworks have opened to qualifications awarded outside formal education and training. By the end of 2016 many countries had reached the operational stage of their NQF implementation and 21 countries are now indicating NQF and EQF levels on certificates and qualifications. Links between NQFs and validation are increasing.

**Action points:**
- Cedefop to publish the 23 national chapters that have been updated onto the European Inventory on NQFs: [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/european-inventory-on-nqf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/european-inventory-on-nqf).
- Cedefop to prepare and publish the synthesis report on the base of the national chapters by the end of March.

**Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) delegation study visit to EQF**

SADC presented the state of play of the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) and an exchange of information with the EQF AG took place. Members of the EQF AG underlined the importance of collaboration and cooperation as well as the relevance of the EQF AG and PLAs as tools to foster countries and stakeholders involvement in the process.

**New Skills Agenda for Europe**

**Updates on the state of play of Council negotiations:**

**Revision EQF Recommendation:**
Further to the first reading of the proposal at the Education Committee in the autumn of 2016, the Slovak Presidency presented a first revision of the text on 19 December. At the Education Committee on 6 February 2017 the discussion was limited to recommendations and annexes. Recitals will be discussed at a later stage. The text will be discussed again with the Maltese Presidency at the beginning of March. The Education Committee asked for a technical discussion in the EQF AG on Annex II of the Commission proposal, where "Responsibility and Autonomy" replaces "Competence" as heading of the third column in the level descriptors. The discussion took place within the EQF AG on 8-9 February 2017.

**Revision Europass decision**
After a first discussion on 2 December, the Commission produced a non-paper, further clarifying the Europass proposal, which was discussed by the Education Committee on 6 February. Member States raised issues especially on ESCO and on the effect of mentioning EQF in a decision. COM explained that during the Education Committee the legal service of the Council confirmed (orally) that to mention EQF in a decision does not affect its legal nature as such. Negotiations will be pursued under the Maltese Presidency in March.

**Action point:**
- COM to prepare the minutes of the discussion on Annex II to be sent to the Maltese Presidency. The note will be sent to the EQF AG members for revision and members absent at the meeting can take this opportunity to add their expert
Validation of non-formal and informal learning

- COM presented note 39-3 on the approach to take by the EQF AG in discussing the national one-off reports on validation. The note prepared in cooperation with Cedefop has been built up on the basis of EQF AG inputs received further to a Commission e-mail (21 December 2016) with a set of questions on the working method.
- A discussion on the aim, the structure and process of the presentation of the one-off reports took place. COM particularly involved in the discussion those countries that already confirmed presenting their one-off report (LU-AU-PT), or that intend to do so (FR-DE-CY).

Action point:
- COM to disseminate before the EQF AG meeting on 28-30 March a revised note based on feedback received. COM to make concrete proposals and to provide more detailed information on the potential role of discussants in the process.

Peer Learning Activities

- COM presented note 39-4 on the PLAs work-plan for 2017-2018 in the context of the EQF AG.
- Presentations on PLA proposals in the context of the EQF were made by PL – Horizontal comparison; IE - Thoughts about NQF Evaluation; AT - EQF and Credit Systems: COM – Communication and databases.
- Presentation on PLA proposals in the context of VNFIL were made by: BE – Funding validation; LLP – The role of non-governmental stakeholders in implementing VNFIL recommendation; COM - Skills Audit; COM - Quality assurance of validation.

Action points:
- Members of the AG to express interest to host the PLAs proposed by COM (Communication and databases, Skills audit, Quality assurance of validation) and by IE (Thoughts about NQF Evaluation). If no interest is expressed by members of the EQF AG, Cedefop may decide to address the theme proposed by IE and the COM may host the PLA on communication and databases.
- AT is invited to elaborate further the proposed PLA on EQF and Credit Systems in order to further present it at the EQF AG meeting on 28-30 March.
- COM to keep updated the PLA work plan that will be discussed by the EQF AG at the meeting of 28-30 March.

The information further to the actions points should be sent to zelda.azzara@ec.europa.eu and koen.nomden@ec.europa.eu.

Planned EQF AG Meetings in 2017:

- March 28-30
- June 13-15
- October 3-5
• December 11-13