

RECOMMENDATIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

of 22 May 2017

on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

(2017/C 189/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 165 and 166 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) Qualifications serve a variety of purposes. They signal to employers what their holders in principle know and are able to do ('learning outcomes'). They may be a prerequisite for accessing certain regulated professions. They help education and training authorities and providers to determine the level and content of learning acquired by an individual. They are also important for an individual as an expression of personal achievement. Therefore qualifications play an important role in raising employability, easing mobility and access to further education.
- (2) Qualifications are the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process by a competent authority and typically take the form of documents such as certificates or diplomas. They determine that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Those learning outcomes may be achieved through a variety of paths in formal, non-formal or informal settings, whether in national or international contexts. Information on learning outcomes should be easily accessible and transparent.
- (3) The recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning⁽¹⁾ created a common reference framework of eight levels of qualifications, expressed as learning outcomes with increasing levels of proficiency. They serve as a translation device between different qualifications systems and their levels. The purpose of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) is to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications.
- (4) The wider objectives of this recommendation are to contribute to modernising education and training systems and to increase the employability, mobility and social integration of workers and learners. It further aims at better linking formal, non-formal and informal learning and supporting the validation of learning outcomes acquired in different settings.
- (5) Member States have developed or are developing national qualifications frameworks based on learning outcomes and are relating these to the EQF through a 'referencing' process. The EQF levels and learning outcome descriptors contribute to better transparency and comparability of qualifications of different national systems. They also contribute to a general shift towards a learning outcomes orientation in education and training. Referencing to the EQF should be done through the national qualifications frameworks or, where these do not exist, national qualifications systems (hereafter 'national qualifications frameworks or systems').

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 111, 6.5.2008, p. 1.

- (6) Qualifications are more transparent and comparable when they are presented in documents that include a reference to the applicable EQF level and a description of the achieved learning outcomes.
- (7) A wide range of stakeholders should be involved in implementing the EQF at Union and national levels in order to ensure its broad support. Key stakeholders include all learners, education and training providers, qualifications authorities, quality assurance bodies, employers, trade unions, chambers of industry, commerce and skilled crafts, bodies involved in the recognition of academic and professional qualifications, employment services and services in charge of migrant integration.
- (8) In its report to the European Parliament and the Council of 19 December 2013 on the evaluation of the EQF, the Commission concluded that the EQF is widely accepted as a reference point for developing national qualifications frameworks, for implementing the learning outcomes approach, and for improving the transparency and recognition of skills and competences. It emphasised that the Union should make it possible for learners and workers to make their skills and competences more visible no matter where they acquired them.
- (9) In that report the Commission also concluded that the EQF Advisory Group has provided effective guidance for national referencing processes and has built trust and understanding among participating countries. It further concluded that the effectiveness of the EQF National Coordination Points largely depends on how closely they are linked to the national governance of the referencing process.
- (10) Given the positive evaluation of that group, continuation of the EQF Advisory Group is crucial to a consistent, coherent, transparent and coordinated implementation of this Recommendation.
- (11) Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications is one of the new priorities under the 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020). That report stresses that the EQF should be further developed in order to make qualifications more transparent and comparable. With regard to newly arrived migrants, it also stresses that existing transparency instruments could help a better understanding of foreign qualifications in the Union, and vice versa.
- (12) The EQF and the national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to it can support existing recognition practices thanks to the strengthened trust, understanding and comparability of qualifications they bring. That can make the process of recognition for learning and working purposes easier. Overarching qualifications frameworks such as the EQF could serve as information tools for recognition practices as mentioned in the recommendation on the use of qualifications frameworks in the recognition of foreign qualifications, as adopted under the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.
- (13) National qualifications frameworks and systems change over time, therefore referencing to the EQF should be reviewed and updated, whenever relevant.
- (14) Trust in the quality and level of qualifications that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the EQF (hereafter 'qualifications with an EQF level') is essential in order to support mobility of learners and workers within and across sectoral and geographical borders. The recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning contained common principles on quality assurance in higher education and vocational education and training. They respected the responsibility of Member States for quality assurance arrangements applying to national qualifications in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training build a basis for such common principles.
- (15) The possibility of developing a register, outside the field of higher education, for bodies monitoring quality assurance systems for qualifications could be explored.
- (16) Credit systems can help individuals to progress in learning by facilitating flexible learning pathways and transfer across different levels and types of education and training and across national borders, enabling learners to accumulate and transfer different learning outcomes acquired in different learning contexts, including online, non-formal and informal learning. The learning outcomes approach can also facilitate the design, delivery and assessment of full qualifications or components of qualifications.

- (17) Credit systems at both national and European levels operate within institutional contexts like higher education or vocational education and training. At European level, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System has been developed for higher education in the European Higher Education Area. For vocational education and training, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training is being developed in accordance with the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)⁽¹⁾. Links between national qualifications frameworks and credit systems, where appropriate, could be promoted.
- (18) While the Union *acquis* on legal migration and asylum provides for equal treatment with nationals in terms of recognition of qualifications and even for facilitation measures as far as beneficiaries of international protection are concerned in accordance with Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽²⁾, high rates of over-qualification and under-employment persist among third-country nationals with tertiary education. Cooperation between the Union and third countries over the transparency of qualifications can foster migrant integration into Union labour markets. Given the growing migration flows to and from the Union, a better understanding and a fair recognition of qualifications awarded outside the Union is needed.
- (19) The main features of the EQF, namely its learning outcomes approach, the definition of level descriptors, and the establishment of referencing criteria as developed by the EQF Advisory Group, have been a source of inspiration for the development of national and regional qualifications frameworks throughout the world. An increasing number of third countries and regions are seeking closer links between their qualifications framework and the EQF.
- (20) Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽³⁾ provides that common training frameworks for regulated professions can be set up through a Commission delegated act as a common set of knowledge, skills and competences. Common training frameworks are to be based on levels of the EQF. Reference to EQF levels on qualifications is not to affect access to the labour market where professional qualifications have been recognised in accordance with Directive 2005/36/EC.
- (21) The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area provides descriptors for the short cycle (that can be linked to or within the first cycle), the first, second and third cycles of higher education. Each cycle descriptor offers a statement on the achievements and abilities associated with the qualifications awarded at the end of that cycle. The EQF is compatible with the qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area and its cycle descriptors. The short cycle (that can be linked to or within the first cycle), the first, second and third cycles of the qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area correspond to EQF levels 5-8 respectively.
- (22) Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁴⁾ helps people to better present their skills, competences and qualifications.
- (23) A European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations classification (ESCO) is being developed by the Commission. Used on a voluntary basis, it could support a better link between education and employment. The data developed by Member States in the context of the EQF could serve as input for this classification.
- (24) Information on the process of referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the EQF and on qualifications with an EQF level should be readily accessible to the public. The use of common data structures and formats would help achieve that objective. It would also facilitate the understanding and use of published information on qualifications.
- (25) Coherence, complementarity and synergies at national and Union levels should exist between the implementation of the EQF, national qualifications frameworks or systems and tools on transparency and recognition of skills, competences and qualifications, including those for quality assurance, credit accumulation and transfer and tools developed in the context of the European Higher Education Area on transparency and recognition of skills, competences and qualifications.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 155, 8.7.2009, p. 11.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (OJ L 337, 20.12.2011, p. 9).

⁽³⁾ Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 22).

⁽⁴⁾ Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass) (OJ L 390, 31.12.2004, p. 6).

- (26) The development of the EQF should be fully coherent with existing European cooperation in education and training under the ET 2020 strategic framework and future European ET strategic frameworks.
- (27) This recommendation does not replace or define national qualifications frameworks or systems. The EQF does not describe specific qualifications or an individual's competences and particular qualifications should be referenced to the appropriate EQF level by way of the relevant national qualifications systems.
- (28) This recommendation consolidates the EQF as a common reference framework of eight levels expressed as learning outcomes, serving as a translation device between different qualifications frameworks or systems and their levels.
- (29) Given its non-binding nature, this recommendation conforms to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality by supporting and supplementing Member States' activities through facilitating further cooperation between them to increase the transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications. It should be implemented in accordance with national law and practice,

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT MEMBER STATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

1. Use the EQF to reference national qualifications frameworks or systems and to compare all types and levels of qualifications in the Union that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems, in particular by referencing their qualification levels to levels of the EQF set out in Annex II and by using the criteria set out in Annex III.
2. Review and update, when relevant, the referencing of the levels of the national qualifications frameworks or systems to the levels of the EQF set out in Annex II and using the criteria set out in Annex III, with due regard to the national context.
3. Ensure that qualifications with an EQF level are in accordance with the common principles for quality assurance set out in Annex IV, without prejudice to national quality assurance principles that apply to national qualifications.
4. Where appropriate, promote links between credit systems and national qualifications frameworks or systems taking into account the common principles on credit systems set out in Annex V, without prejudice to national decisions to (i) make use of credit systems; and (ii) relate them to national qualifications frameworks or systems. Those common principles will not lead to an automatic recognition of qualifications.
5. Where appropriate, take measures, so that all newly issued qualification documents by the competent authorities (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements), and/or registers of qualifications contain a clear reference to the appropriate EQF level.
6. Make the results of the referencing process publicly available at national and Union levels and, where possible, ensure that information on qualifications and their learning outcomes is accessible and published, using the data fields in accordance with Annex VI.
7. Encourage the use of EQF by social partners, public employment services, education providers, quality assurance bodies and public authorities to support the comparison of qualifications and transparency of the learning outcomes.
8. Ensure the continuation and coordination of tasks implemented by EQF National Coordination Points (EQF NCP). The main tasks of the EQF NCP are to support national authorities in referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the EQF and to bring the EQF closer to individuals and organisations.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT THE COMMISSION, IN COOPERATION WITH MEMBER STATES AND STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN THE EQF ADVISORY GROUP:

9. Support consistency in the further implementation of the EQF across Member States by comparing and discussing the methodologies used for the levelling of qualifications in national qualifications frameworks or systems, with due regard to national contexts.
10. With due regard to national contexts, support the development of methodologies for the description, use and application of learning outcomes to increase transparency and the understanding and comparability of qualifications.
11. Support the setting up of voluntary procedures on the levelling of international qualifications through national qualification frameworks or systems and information exchange and consultation between Member States on those procedures to ensure consistency.

12. Develop guidance for communicating the EQF, in particular how to present EQF levels on newly issued certificates, diplomas and supplements, and/or registers of qualifications, in accordance with national systems and regulations on certificates and diplomas.
13. Explore possibilities for the development and application of criteria and procedures to enable, in accordance with international agreements, the comparison of third countries' national and regional qualifications frameworks with the EQF.
14. Set up peer learning and best practice exchanges between the Member States and, where appropriate, facilitate peer counselling at the request of the Member States.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS THAT THE COMMISSION:

15. Ensure that the implementation of this recommendation is supported through actions funded by relevant Union programmes.
16. Ensure an effective governance of the EQF implementation by maintaining and fully supporting the EQF Advisory Group established in 2009 composed of representatives of the Member States and other participating countries, the social partners and other stakeholders as appropriate. The EQF Advisory Group should ensure overall coherence and promote transparency and trust in the process of referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the EQF.
17. Report on progress following the adoption of this recommendation, as appropriate, in the context of relevant education, training and employment policy frameworks.
18. Assess and evaluate, in cooperation with the Member States and after consulting the stakeholders concerned, action taken in response to this recommendation and by 2022 report to the Council on the experience gained and implications for the future, including, if necessary, a possible review and revision of this recommendation.

The recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning is repealed.

Done at Brussels, 22 May 2017.

For the Council

The President

E. BARTOLO

ANNEX I

Definitions

For the purposes of this recommendation, the following definitions apply:

- (a) '*qualification*' means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent authority determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards;
- (b) '*national qualifications system*' means all aspects of a Member State's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. That includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications. A national qualifications system may be composed of several subsystems and may include a national qualifications framework;
- (c) '*national qualifications framework*' means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims at integrating and coordinating national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society;
- (d) '*international qualification*' means a qualification awarded by a legally established international body (association, organisation, sector or company) or by a national body acting on behalf of an international body that is used in more than one country and that includes learning outcomes assessed with reference to standards established by an international body;
- (e) '*learning outcomes*' means statements regarding what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy;
- (f) '*knowledge*' means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;
- (g) '*skills*' means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);
- (h) '*responsibility and autonomy*' means the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility;
- (i) '*competence*' means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development;
- (j) '*validation of non-formal and informal learning*' means the process of confirmation by a competent authority that an individual has acquired learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning settings measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases: identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual, documentation to make visible the individual's experiences, a formal assessment of those experiences and certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification;
- (k) '*formal recognition of learning outcomes*' means the process of granting official status by a competent authority to acquired learning outcomes for purposes of further studies or employment, through (i) the award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles); (ii) the validation of non-formal and informal learning; (iii) the grant of equivalence, credit or waivers;
- (l) '*credit*' means confirmation that a part of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of learning outcomes has been assessed and validated by a competent authority, according to an agreed standard; credit is awarded by competent authorities when the individual has achieved the defined learning outcomes, evidenced by appropriate assessments and can be expressed in a quantitative value (e.g. credits or credit points) demonstrating the estimated workload an individual typically needs for achieving related learning outcomes;

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- (m) '*credit systems*' means a transparency tool for facilitating the recognition of credit(s). These systems can comprise, inter alia, equivalences, exemptions, units/modules that can be accumulated and transferred, the autonomy of providers who can individualise pathways, and the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- (n) '*credit transfer*' means the process of allowing individuals who have accumulated credit in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context.
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Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.

	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
	In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.	In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).	In the context of the EQF responsibility and autonomy is described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility
Level 1 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are	basic general knowledge	basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
Level 2 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are	basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	work or study under supervision with some autonomy
Level 3 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 3 are	knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
Level 4 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are	factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities

	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
Level 5 (*) The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are	comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change review and develop performance of self and others
Level 6 (**) The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are	advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
Level 7 (***) The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are	highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
Level 8 (****) The learning outcomes relevant to Level 8 are	knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

Compatibility with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area provides descriptors for three cycles agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process. Each cycle descriptor offers a generic statement of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of that cycle.

(*) The descriptor for the short cycle developed by the Joint Quality Initiative as part of the Bologna process, (that can be within or linked to the first cycle), corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 5.

(**) The descriptor for the first cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 6.

(***) The descriptor for the second cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 7.

(****) The descriptor for the third cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 8.

ANNEX III

Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications frameworks or systems to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

1. The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and published by the competent authorities.
 2. There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications frameworks or systems and the level descriptors of the EQF.
 3. The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems.
 4. The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent.
 5. The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications frameworks or systems and are consistent with the principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to this recommendation.
 6. The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.
 7. The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.
 8. The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications frameworks or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing, and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.
 9. Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.
 10. Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.
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ANNEX IV

Quality assurance principles for qualifications that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

All qualifications with an EQF level should be quality assured to enhance trust in their quality and level.

In accordance with national circumstances and taking into account sectoral differences quality assurance of qualifications with an EQF level should ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾:

1. address the design of qualifications as well as application of the learning outcomes approach;
2. ensure valid and reliable assessment according to agreed and transparent learning outcomes-based standards and address the process of certification;
3. consist of feedback mechanisms and procedures for continuous improvement;
4. involve all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the process;
5. be composed of consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review;
6. be an integral part of the internal management, including sub-contracted activities, of bodies issuing qualifications with an EQF level;
7. be based on clear and measurable objectives, standards and guidelines;
8. be supported by appropriate resources;
9. include a regular review of existing external monitoring bodies or agencies, carrying out quality assurance;
10. include the electronic accessibility of evaluation results.

⁽¹⁾ These common principles are fully compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and with European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET).

⁽²⁾ Depending on national circumstances, these principles may not apply to general education.

ANNEX V

Principles for credit systems related to national qualifications frameworks or systems referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) ⁽¹⁾

The EQF and national qualifications frameworks or systems, by using the learning outcomes approach, should better support individuals when moving (i) between various levels of education and training; (ii) within and between sectors of education and training; (iii) between education and training and the labour market; and (iv) within and across borders. Without prejudice to national decisions to (i) make use of credit systems; and (ii) relate them to national qualifications frameworks or systems, different credit systems, where appropriate, should work together with national qualifications frameworks or systems to support transitions and facilitate progression. To this aim, credit systems related to national qualifications frameworks or systems where appropriate, should respect the following principles:

1. Credit systems should support flexible learning pathways, for the benefit of individual learners.
2. When designing and developing qualifications, the learning outcomes approach should be systematically used to facilitate the transfer of (components of) qualifications and progression in learning.
3. Credit systems should facilitate transfer of learning outcomes and progression of learners across institutional and national borders.
4. Credit systems should be underpinned by explicit and transparent quality assurance.
5. The credit acquired by an individual should be documented, expressing the acquired learning outcomes, the name of the competent credit awarding institution and, where relevant, the related credit value.
6. Systems for credit transfer and accumulation should seek synergies with arrangements for validation of prior learning, working together to facilitate and promote transfer and progression.
7. Credit systems should be developed and improved through cooperation between stakeholders at the appropriate national and Union levels.

⁽¹⁾ These common principles are fully compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

ANNEX VI

Elements for data fields for the electronic publication of information on qualifications with an EQF level

DATA		Required/ Optional	
Title of the qualification		Required	
Field (*)		Required	
Country/Region (code)		Required	
EQF Level		Required	
Description of the qualification (***)	Either	Knowledge	Required
		Skills	Required
		Responsibility and autonomy	Required
	Or	Open text field describing what the learner is expected to know, understand and able to do	Required
Awarding body or competent authority (**)		Required	
Credit points/notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes		Optional	
Internal quality assurance processes		Optional	
External quality assurance/regulatory body		Optional	
Further information on the qualification		Optional	
Source of information		Optional	
Link to relevant supplements		Optional	
URL of the qualification		Optional	
Information language (code)		Optional	
Entry requirements		Optional	
Expiry date (if relevant)		Optional	

DATA		Required/ Optional
Ways to acquire qualification		Optional
Relationship to occupations or occupational fields		Optional

(*) ISCED FoET2013

(**) The minimum required information on the awarding body or the competent authority should facilitate to find information about it, which would include its name, or if applicable the name of the group of awarding bodies or competent authorities, completed with a URL or contact information.

(***) This description shall consist of open text fields, with no prescribed use of standard terminology and no obligation for the Member States to translate the description into other EU languages.