



The European Qualifications Framework: supporting learning, work and cross border mobility

15-16 March 2018, Brussels

Workshop 3

How do qualifications frameworks facilitate the validation of non-formal and informal learning?

Learning outcomes-based qualifications frameworks can value all learning, independent of where and how the learning took place. The purpose of the revised European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Recommendation is to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications. It further aims at better linking formal, non-formal and informal learning and supporting the validation of learning outcomes acquired in different settings.

The EQF Recommendation and the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning are complementary. The Recommendation on validation invites EU Member States to have arrangements in place by 2018 for the validation of non-formal and informal learning which enable individuals to obtain a full qualification, or, where applicable, part qualification, on the basis of validated non-formal and informal learning experiences. Whilst taking into consideration national, regional and/or local, as well as sectoral needs and characteristics, these arrangements should be linked to National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and are in line with the EQF. EQF referencing criterion 3 relates to the fact that national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Qualifications frameworks are important to create bridges between different forms of learning. Within Europe validation arrangements are more and more connected to developments of NQFs. In fact, several countries are developing their validation systems within the same process of creating their NQFs.

NQFs can articulate the development of validation in different ways, namely by:

- constructing standards involving all relevant stakeholders, needed to successfully implement validation,
- providing a common set of standards that all learning can refer to, and
- giving a reference point to understand the learning that occurs outside formal institutions.

The purpose of the workshop is to further discuss how qualifications frameworks and systems arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning are interrelated. The workshop will be introduced by the presentation of a state of play of validation in Europe; in successive rounds several country experiences will be presented and shared.

The following questions will be addressed by the speakers and discussed by the participants in the working group sessions:

- 1) How can qualification frameworks better support the creation of links between formal, non-formal and informal learning?
- 2) What have been the main achievements at national level in linking qualifications frameworks and validation arrangements?
- 3) What have been the difficulties encountered in aligning qualifications frameworks and validation arrangements and how should/could they be overcome?