

Governance of EU tools and services for skills and qualifications Commission Technical non-paper

KEY ELEMENTS

The actions proposed in the Agenda, including proposals to revise the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Recommendation and the Europass Decision, seek to create synergies and strengthen the operation and value of tools and services. Effective governance structures are essential to ensure the necessary support and sharing of expertise to implement them effectively and efficiently. The New Skills Agenda for Europe offers an opportunity to consider whether the current governance structures, at EU and national level, are suitable to achieve the policy goals and ensure they are adapted to the new needs.

This technical non-paper aims to provide a basis for discussion with the Education Committee on the ways to review the organisational and implementation structures dealing with EU tools and services, related to skills and qualifications and of a horizontal character (that is, non-specific to a particular education sector). In particular, an exchange of views with Member States is welcome on two proposals:

1) At EU level, 6 groups currently operate to support work between the EU, Member States and stakeholders around EU tools and services of a cross-sectoral nature for skills and qualifications. A single expert group can be established to support co-operation, communication and sharing of expertise on these topics. The group would be formed as a COM *informal expert group*¹ and act as a forum for enhanced co-operation and communication, allow for input from both education and training and employment experts; and, would support a shared, consistent approach to the development and implementation of tools and services that is not currently in place. The group would be supported by a wider community of practice active on peer learning activities.

2) At national level, 3 types of centre currently operate to support promotion and implementation of EQF, Europass and Euroguidance respectively. Currently, separate operation and financing of the centres limits co-operation and a strategic approach by centres to promotion and implementation at national level. In order to stimulate the efficiency and simplification in the way the EU financial support is disbursed, within the current relevant legal provisions, each participating country would be invited to designate a leading partner of a multiannual framework partnership agreement to be the main beneficiary of EU funding and the main interface with the Commission in relation to the activities currently carried out by the three beneficiary centres. This option offers clear potential for simplification of administration. Depending on the outcome of the Council and EP work on the Europass decision, MS will be invited to appoint one national coordination point for skills (see COM proposal for revision of Europass) which should ensure more strategic coordination on skills related issues. The decision to maintain the EQF NCPs, Europass and Euroguidance centres as single entities would pertain to the national level.

¹ C(2016) 3301 COMMISSION DECISION of 30.5.2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups:

INTRODUCTION

The adoption of the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#) offers an opportunity to reflect on how EU tools and services for skills and qualifications are fulfilling their objectives. Actions within the Agenda, including proposals to revise the [EQF Recommendation](#) and [Europass Decision](#), seek to strengthen, create synergies and enhance the effectiveness of EU tools and services.

These tools and services have been developed and implemented by the EU, Member States and stakeholders to support mobility, visibility and understanding of skills and qualifications, employability, and, ultimately to serve the needs of individuals in the context of today's education and training and employment sectors. In order to serve such needs, these services are now being revisited, streamlined and updated. For successful development and implementation it is crucial that their governance reflects and supports coherent, effective delivery of tools and services and brings together necessary expertise from both education and training and employment sectors.

The proposals presented in this non-paper are based on consultation with Member States and stakeholders as well as previous evaluations and feedback. The achievements and commitment of participants of the existing groups are clear and the Commission intends to build on these to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

To-date, EU tools and services are supported by two forms of governance structures:

- Expert groups at EU level to support cooperation between the EU, Member States and stakeholders. Each of the groups described below are informal expert groups².
- EU-supported centres operating at national level.

This non-paper describes the operation of governance or implementation structures at EU and national level associated with the following cross-sector EU tools and services:

- the Europass Framework;
- the European Qualifications Framework (EQF);
- validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL);
- the Classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO);
- lifelong and career guidance services;
- the 'Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe' portal
- the EU Skills Panorama.

This non-paper does not address or affect ET 2020 governance structures (i.e. the High Level Group on Education and Training, the Director General meetings for Schools, Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education, the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks, the Working Groups on schools; modernisation of higher education; adult education; vocational education; digital skills and competence; citizenship). It also does not affect sector specific policy groups and implementation bodies such as those for vocational education and training (e.g. ACVT, structures related to the EQAVET and ECVET Recommendations), adult learning or higher education (e.g. European Higher Education Area Structures such as the Bologna Follow Up Group or the ENIC-NARIC network).

² C(2016) 3301 COMMISSION DECISION of 30.5.2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES – STATE OF PLAY

1.1. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

The EQF Advisory Group

The EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG) is an informal expert group set up by the Commission to assist with overall implementation of the EQF and to follow up the implementation of the 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning³. The EQF AG comprises representatives of all participating countries and EU level representation of social partners, education and training providers, students, public employment services, chambers of commerce and industry, youth and volunteering sectors.

The group works to bring overall coherence and support to the process of relating national qualifications systems and levels to the EQF. The EQF AG oversees the referencing (i.e. the process of relating) of the EQF to national qualifications systems and their levels. The EQF AG also acts as a forum for discussing other matters related to the EQF implementation such as learning outcomes, international qualifications, the international dimension of the EQF, links with ESCO (two members of the EQF AG are also members of the ESCO Board), the development of the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications portal, consistency of EQF referencing across countries and synergies between the EQF and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning invites Member States to have in place arrangements for the validation of learning acquired outside formal education and training, in line with the EQF. It designated the EQF AG to follow up the Recommendation. For this purpose the composition of the EQF AG was enlarged to 2 representatives per country participating in the EQF AG: one for the EQF and one for validation. Furthermore representatives from the Youth and Volunteering sectors were added to the EQF AG. Usually a part of the agenda of EQF AG meetings is devoted to the validation of non-formal and informal learning. PLA's on validation are organised on a regular basis (1-2 times a year).

Finally, peer learning activities (PLAs) are organised through the EQF-AG to support the development and implementation of the EQF. Each PLA is organised by a Member State, co-financed by the Commission and supported by Cedefop. Participants are representatives of national authorities and national experts on selected topics. The PLAs address particular technical methodological and policy issues and provide a platform for exchange of experiences. These PLAs take place 2-3 times a year

The Commission chairs the EQF AG and provides its secretariat. Cedefop supports the EQF AG by providing technical and analytical support on the EQF implementation and referencing processes⁴. The ETF supports and transfers EQF knowledge to the Partner countries. The Council of Europe is represented in the EQF AG to ensure coordination with the Bologna process, in particular the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area⁵.

³ OJ C 398, 22.12.2012, p. 1.

⁴ Such as through the European Inventory on NQFs <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/european-inventory-on-nqf>

⁵ The Bologna Process, launched with the Bologna Declaration, of 1999, is one of the main voluntary processes at European level, as it is nowadays implemented in 48 states, which define the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). the Bologna Process was meant to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European higher education and to foster student mobility and employability through the introduction of a system based on undergraduate and postgraduate studies with easily readable programmes and degrees. [Members of the Bologna Process](#) are the 48 countries, together with the European Commission, and the consultative members, namely the Council of Europe, UNESCO, EUA, ESU, EURASHE, ENQA, Education International and BUSINESSEUROPE..

EQF-National Coordination Points (NCPs)

Further to the 2008 EQF Recommendation all participating countries have set up EQF-NCPs⁶ to support and coordinate a transparent referencing of the national qualifications systems to the EQF. The Recommendation also invites the NCPs to publish the result of the referencing process, to provide access to information and guidance to stakeholders on how national qualifications relate to the EQF through national qualifications systems and to promote the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the comparison and use of qualifications at the European level⁷. The work of the NCPs can by necessity entail achieving both political buy-in from key stakeholders at national level as well as information and promotional activities targeted at individuals more akin to the work of National Europass Centres below. The EQF-NCPs would typically meet as a network 1 – 2 times a year and would also meet with national correspondents for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as a way to ensure co-operation between those responsible for the EHEA and EQF Frameworks.

1.2. ESCO (The Classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations)

ESCO identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations in a standard way, using standard terminology in all EU languages and an open format that can be used by third parties' software. ESCO will be used in the planned new Europass tool to ensure interoperability with other services. ESCO is currently governed through the following structures:

ESCO Board

The ESCO Board is an informal Commission expert group providing strategic guidance on ESCO to the European Commission. The Board supports the Commission in promoting the implementation and continuous use of ESCO in the labour market and in education and training and discusses strategic issues related to ESCO. The Board has met on average 4 times per year and will cease activities following the launch of ESCO v1.

ESCO Maintenance Committee (MAI)

The ESCO Maintenance Committee is an informal Commission expert group that provides advice on the technical and conceptual development of ESCO. The Maintenance Committee formulates opinions on technical implementation, quality control principles and the revision of ESCO data. The Committee advises the Commission and the ESCO Board on the implementation of ESCO in concrete business cases. The ESCO Maintenance Committee typically meets four to six times a year and will cease activities following the launch of ESCO v1, planned for 2017.

The Member States working group on ESCO

The Member States working group on ESCO is an informal Commission expert group, composed of Member States representatives and social partners that advises and supports the Commission on the implementation and development of ESCO. The group provides feedback on the mapping of national classifications systems to ESCO, works to ensure links between ESCO and the updated EURES Regulation. The group typically meets twice a year.

1.3. Guidance and Learning Opportunities

⁶ Activities of the centres are co-financed through the Erasmus+ programme (co-financing of max 75 per cent for EQF-NCPs).

⁷ The EQF-NCPs also receive financial support for the development of national databases for qualifications, to be linked to the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal.

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) was an informal group created by Member States and coordinated by a secretariat appointed by network member countries that assisted member-countries and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and employment sectors in line with the priorities identified in the EU Resolutions on Lifelong Guidance (2004; 2008). Since 2007, the ELGPN has produced a range of evidence, policy and tools on European co-operation in lifelong guidance policy development⁸ but has never acted as a policy coordination group for guidance policies at EU level. The network has rather acted as a forum for co-operation and co-ordination in the area of lifelong guidance and led to the development of national representative structures for guidance professionals and other relevant actors in a number of countries. These national forums have brought together many relevant partners in the fields of education, training, employment, youth and social inclusion, as well as government and experts. The ELGPN received financial support under the Lifelong Learning programme and Erasmus+ from 2007-2015 (in the form of a grant) and typically met twice a year. The group is not currently active.

Euroguidance

Euroguidance is a European network of National Euroguidance Centres. In 1992 the European Commission took the initiative to form a European Network of national resource and information centres for guidance, which later became the Euroguidance Network. Euroguidance was established as one of the three strands of the PETRA programme. Euroguidance centres work in support of two common goals: to promote the European dimension in guidance and to provide quality information on lifelong guidance and mobility for learning purposes. Euroguidance centres also contribute content on learning opportunities at national level for inclusion in the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal. The main target group of Euroguidance is guidance practitioners and policy makers from both the educational and employment sectors. They work to link together guidance systems in Europe and promote mobility, helping guidance counsellors and individuals to better understand the opportunities⁹ available to European citizens throughout Europe. The centres meet as a network typically 1 – 2 times a year.

The Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal

The Ploteus Coordination Group led the development and implementation of the learning opportunities and guidance elements of the current Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal. The group considered the technical development of the portal as well as agreement on structure and content for presentation of information in the portal. The group comprised Commission representatives as well as representatives of the Euroguidance network and technical experts. ***The EQF Portal Group*** led the development and implementation of the qualifications elements, information on the EQF and EQF referencing reports as included in the current Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal. The group considered the technical development of the portal as well as agreement on structure and content for presentation of information in the portal. The group comprised Commission representatives as well as representatives of the EQF-AG, NCPs and technical experts. Both groups were operated as a single coordination group for the portal more recently.

1.4. Europass

Regarding Europass, each participating country has designated a National Europass Centre (these centres are established through the current Europass Decision).

⁸ ELGPN Summative Report 2007-2015: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/elgpn-summative-report-2007-2015>

⁹ Euroguidance centres also receive financial support for the development of national databases of learning opportunities, to be linked to the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal.

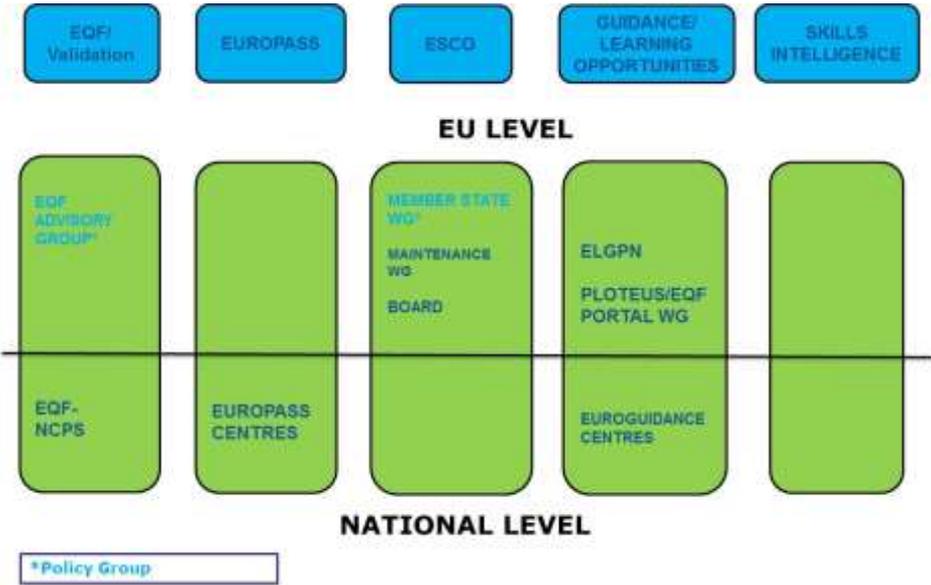
The National Europass Centres are responsible for promotion of the Europass documents and each designs an annual activity programme to create awareness and support the use of the documents. Activities are targeted at varying audiences: the centres may target individuals to create awareness of Europass and their entitlement to receive the Europass Diploma or Certificate Supplement and to promote the benefits of documents they can themselves complete (the Europass CV and Europass Mobility). They target organisations, including education institutions that have a direct role in the implementation of Europass documents (in particular the Diploma and Certificate Supplements). They also target employers and recruiters with information on the use and benefits of the Europass documents.

The implementation of Europass is not supported by a coordination group at EU level; however, a network comprising the national centres, co-ordinated by the Commission, is also established through the Europass Decision. The network typically meets 1 – 2 times a year.

1.5. Skills Intelligence (EU Skills Panorama)

Currently there are no governance groups addressing the implementation of the EU Skills Panorama and the topic of labour market skills intelligence more generally.

The table below offers a summary of the governance structures discussed here:



II -LACK OF EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

2.1. Absence of a consistent, coordinated approach to tools and services for skills and qualifications

As demonstrated in the descriptions above, many of the existing **EU-level** groups address overlapping topics, albeit from a particular stakeholder perspective. However, there is no or limited cooperation and communication between these groups. The effect is that there is limited sharing of expertise between these groups and a disjointed and incomplete approach to development and implementation of tools and services. The proposed revision of the Europass Decision seeks to enhance the offering of

EU tools and services, including by strengthening the mutually supporting links between each one. Currently, there is no mechanism for the guidance sector to have input into other EU policy processes such as for Europass or the EQF; there is no EU-level group to support or engage with the Europass network of national centres, and there is no group for EU Skills Panorama and the topic of skills intelligence.

At national level the lack of connectivity between centres similarly limits a strategic approach to the promotion and implementation of tools and services. The current operation of centres and their distinct terms of reference means there is little strategic cooperation that could mutually reinforce the work of each centre on an ongoing basis or support a strategic approach to the delivery of tools and services. The existing system has resulted in differing designated bodies¹⁰ - each with different brands and operations - and in the delineation of the centres and their respective services and tools. Despite increased emphasis on synergies and cooperation between centres called for in the terms of reference included in invitations to apply for a grant issued to the centres in recent years, connectivity between the EQF, Europass and Euroguidance is still largely absent. This insular approach to delivery limits any strategic development among national centres. Evaluations¹¹ find that the impact of the work of the centres is unclear, that the centres do not reach all their intended audiences and in particular do not appear to reach disadvantaged groups. Evaluations of the activities¹² of centres have found benefits and achievements at a technical level (i.e. reaching audiences, efficient pooling of resources) where centres are housed in one location and/or there is close co-operation between centres. However, current operation and co-financing means there is little real strategic co-operation between centres.

2.2. Ineffective cooperation and inefficient use of resources

A number of practical resource issues are raised by current operation of governance structures for tools and services.

A summary of the **EU-level groups**, frequency of meetings, membership and budget is available in *Annex 1*. The budget associated with managing these groups is approximately €850.000 annually. Each of these groups has different meeting schedules and decision-making processes. Securing agreement, organising consultation and discussion among these groups is time consuming and delays implementation of tools and services where agreement or input from more than one group is required. For instance, agreement of terms for description of a qualification to be included in the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal and ESCO took almost two years and required a series of separate meetings and discussions by groups involved with the portal, with EQF (both the AG and national centres) and ESCO groups. The effect can be both an inefficient and disjointed approach to decision-making and development.

Each **national centre** is required to develop and implement an annual programme of activities (see *Annex 1* for the range of differing promotional and information sharing activities of national centres). As national centres are financed separately they submit separate financing requests and final reports under current Erasmus+ grant arrangements. This is the case even where more than one centre is located in a single organisation at national level. Events are mostly hosted or attended separately, while consultation, development of tools and information sharing with stakeholders are managed separately with necessary investment of resources. Evaluations¹³ of the centres have in fact found that current operation leads to information overload for audiences who are confronted with separate event

¹⁰ Data shows that 12 countries currently host all active national centres in one single body; 17 countries host all active centres in two bodies while 7 countries host centres in three different bodies (See *Annex 1*).

¹¹ Synthesis reports of the evaluations of the operations of each centre type are prepared annually by external experts on behalf of the Commission. These have not been published.

¹² Synthesis reports of the evaluations of the operations of each centre type are prepared annually by external experts on behalf of the Commission. These have not been published.

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schedules, brands and messages. This ultimately dilutes the impact of these activities in the eyes of target audiences and beneficiaries while resources are used inefficiently.

It is also worth noting that current funding and organisation of national centres actually heightens administrative burden for centres that do co-operate. Where cooperating on a project or initiative the centres must report on it separately, manage financing so as to avoid any risk of double-financing and request separate invoices in the name of the centre and process these separately. Currently, the tasks related to these grants are carried out by one national body in 12 countries, while they are carried out by two national bodies in 17 countries. In effect the potential for greater cooperation is actively limited by these arrangements in 29 countries. Currently, 7 countries host the centres in three different bodies, see *Annex I*).

III - THE WAY FORWARD

A consistent approach is necessary to ensure three essential features of EU tools and services for skills and qualifications:

- (1) tools and services must evolve in an effective way with input from employment and education and training experts and stakeholders;
- (2) tools and services must interact and be consistent with each other; and,
- (3) new topics or areas of shared interest must be addressed in an effective way.

3.1 Establishment of a co-ordination group at EU level to ensure co-ordination of activities for EU tools and services on skills and qualifications

Governance structures must ensure key stakeholders and experts work together from inception to implementation in a consistent and coordinated way. To address the issues raised the the EU-level groups above¹⁴ could be replaced with a new single group to support co-operation and communication and sharing of expertise between the EU, Member States and stakeholders from both employment and education sectors. This new group would give effect to the Commission's intentions as specified in

- recital 24 of the COM proposal for EQF revision: *"The Commission intends to set up a **platform for cooperation between the Commission, Member States and relevant stakeholders** on the implementation and monitoring of this Recommendation. This will include the tasks implemented by the EQF Advisory Group since 2008"*
- recital 27 of the COM proposal for Europass revision: *"The Commission will guarantee a **platform of cooperation with Member States and relevant stakeholders** to ensure the overall coherence of implementation and monitoring of this Decision"*

The group would operate as an informal expert group established as per the requirements of Commission Decision C(2016) 3301¹⁵. The group would be chaired by the Commission and be comprised of two representatives nominated by the Member States and relevant EEA countries (+ 2 alternates). Member States would select nominees to the group to ensure necessary expertise in the fields of education/training and employment whether they be members from the existing groups or new nominees. Representatives from the Council of Europe, ETF, CEDEFOP, EU level social partners and other relevant stakeholder organisations and groups will also be invited to appoint representatives to the group. The group would meet 4 – 5 times per year.

The scope of the group would cover the implementation of the recommendations on EQF, validation of non-formal and informal learning, and the proposed decision of Europass (encompassing ESCO,

¹⁴ The EQF-AG; ELGPN; ESCO Board; ESCO MS Group; EQF Portal Group; Ploteus Steering Group

¹⁵ C(2016) 3301 COMMISSION DECISION of 30.5.2016 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups

guidance and skills intelligence) with its mandate to ensure overall consistency in the implementation of EU tools and services and links and cooperation with national implementing bodies. In particular the tasks for the group would include:

- supporting activities related to referencing national qualifications frameworks to the EQF;
- monitoring progress achieved by Member States in setting up and managing arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- promoting and monitoring the effectiveness of Europass tools and web-based services;
- supporting the maintenance and updating of ESCO;
- supporting development of skills intelligence and standards (as proposed in Europass decision);
- supporting the development of guidance policy and guidance services.

The new group would support and be supported by a community of practice for exchange and information sharing through peer learning activities. The group may choose to establish ad hoc working groups to pursue specific, time-defined projects. Through this structure and working methods the group would serve as a platform for co-operation and support the effective evolution of the tools and services. The group would support horizontal co-operation between relevant experts and allow for more efficiency in decision-making and sharing of information. Membership and input by a cross-section of experts would ensure that tools are developed and discussed in unison and the group would serve as a forum for identification and discussion of new topics. The group would also ensure connectivity with operations at national level. A separate, but linked group of taxonomy/classification experts would be established to ensure quality updates of ESCO.

3.2 Establishment of a national co-ordination point for skills to ensure co-ordination of activities for EU tools and services on skills and qualifications

The implementation of EU tools and services and their development along with the new EQF and Europass proposals also requires a more coordinated approach at national level. During consultation leading to the adoption of the New Skills Agenda for Europe a number of national centres advised that the existing networks of EQF-NCPs, Euroguidance and Europass have clearly established roles, identities and in some cases well-developed networking and operating methods. The Commission fully acknowledges these and seeks to build on these achievements of each network.

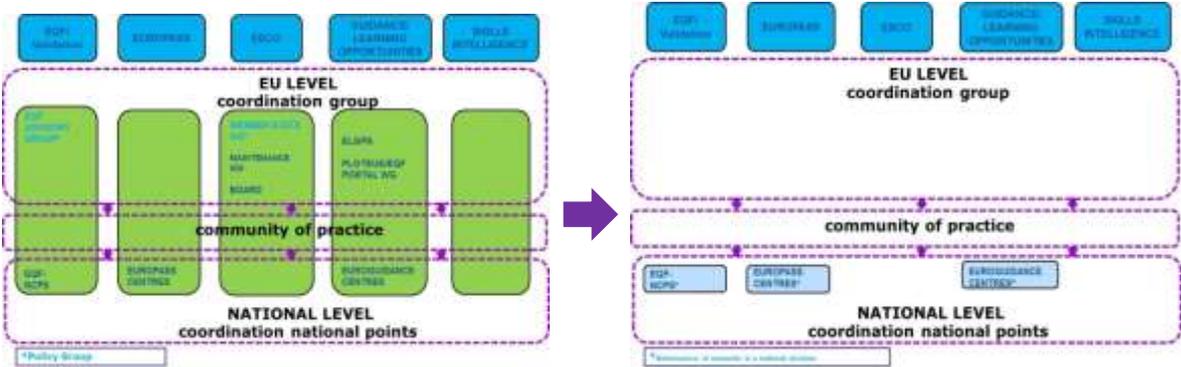
To address the issues raised while striving for structures that better reflect the policy objectives, in a first phase and in the current legal framework, each participating country could designate a leading partner of a multiannual framework partnership agreement to be the main beneficiary of EU co-financing and the main interface with the Commission in relation to the activities currently carried out by the three beneficiary centres (EQF National Coordination Points, National Europass Centres and Euroguidance Centres). The leading partner would act as a national point for receipt of a single EU financial allocation to each country; each Member State would decide, according to national circumstances, how the grant would be distributed between the centres and which entity(ies) would carry out the different activities. The multi-annual framework partnership would be established for the period 2017-2020. Financial allocation would be made in 2 parts; the first at the beginning of the funding period (2017/18) (see *Annex 2*) and the second two years later (2019/20). Currently a grant is allocated to each of the three types of centres annually.

The proposal offers clear potential for simplification of processes and cooperation among centres in participating countries. The single multi-annual grant would allow more established cooperation such as a shared communication programme for instance. Previously, any such collaboration would require management of separate budgets. Participating countries will be able to manage the single grant more

strategically – making decisions at national level on spending based on the priorities and resources of each centre - thus limiting the potential for under consumption of amounts allocated. Under-consumption of the budgets made available through Erasmus+ for the operation of the centres is a persistent issue (See Annex 2). Administrative burden for the participating countries can be reduced: single reports and single budgets will be required on a multi-annual basis allowing. This will allow each country to pursue longer term planning and creates possibilities for a reduction in administrative burden associated with personnel in three separate centres completing this work separately on an annual basis.

In a second stage, and depending on the outcome of the Council and EP work on the Europass decision, Member States would be invited to appoint national coordination points for skills (see Article 8 of the COM proposal for revision of Europass) to instil a more strategic, coherent approach to how tools and services are implemented at national level. The decision to maintain the EQF NCPs, Europass and Euroguidance centres as single entities would pertain to the national level. This proposal fully respects the principle of subsidiarity as it does not interfere with the Member States' choices regarding implementation and coordination arrangements at national level.

The figure below offers a summary of the governance structures would evolve:



ANNEX 1

Operation of EU Level Groups

Group	Meetings/year	Members	Estimated Costs for EU budget ¹⁶
EQF Advisory Group	5	80	200,000
ESCO Board	2	15	19,000
ESCO Maintenance Committee	4	20	64,000
Member States Working Group on ESCO	2	60	60,000
European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)	2	70	Financed by LLP/Erasmus+ in 2007-2015 (av grant per year 850,000) €500.000 for 2015)
Joint EQF Portal/Ploteus Group	1	30	15,000
			858.000

Operation of National Centres

Group	No. meetings/year	No. centres
EQF-NCPs	1-2 times/year as a network	38
National Europass Centres	1-2 times/year as a network	38
National Euroguidance Centres	1-2 times/year as a network	38

Implementation of the EQF, Europass and Euroguidance is supported through the operation of a centre for each action at national level in participating countries. The organisation of these centres is determined by the respective countries including decisions on the selection of designated bodies to host the centres. Currently, the tasks related to these grants are carried out by one national body in 12 countries, while they are carried out by two national bodies in 17 countries (see table below). Activities of the centres are co-financed through the Erasmus+ programme with each centre making an annual application to the Commission for a grant to co-finance their activities.

	Housed in 1 body	Housed in 2 bodies	Housed in 3 bodies
3 actions in place (i.e. EQF + Europass + Euroguidance)	AT; DK; EL; IS; IT ME	EE; FI; HR; IE; LT; LU; LV; MK; MT; NL; NO; PT; SE; SI; TR	BE; CY; CZ; DE; HU; RO; UK
2 actions in place	FR; PL; RS; SK	BG; ES	
1 action in place	BA; LI		
	12	17	7

¹⁶ Based on average reimbursement of €500 for travel costs. MS cover accommodation costs

Information and promotional activities by the national centres

National Centre	Online/Social Media/IT Development
National Europass Centres	Develop national websites (stand-alone websites/web-pages on organisation sites)
	Manages national social media
	Develop 'apps', online newsletters and other digital or online media
	Contribute to content on central Europass website
	Contributes to EU level social media
EQF-NCPs	Develop national websites (stand-alone websites/web-pages on organisation sites)
	Manages national social media
	Contribute content to Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe Portal
	(No EU level social media currently)
Euroguidance Centres	Develop national websites (stand-alone websites, or web-pages within parent organisation websites)
	Manages national social media
	Develop tools, 'apps' for guidance professionals
	Develop 'apps', online newsletters and other digital or online media
	Contribute to content on central Euroguidance website
	Contribute content to Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe Portal

ANNEX 2
Financing of National Centres

Consumption of Erasmus+ co-financing allocation for operation of national centres

	Description	Europass €	Euroguidance €	EQF NCP €	Total €
2010	AWP budget	2.060.000	2.280.000		4.340.000
	Commitment	1.976.406	2.148.005		4.124.411
	Final Grant	1.750.716	1.965.717		3.716.432
2011	AWP budget	2.160.000	2.160.000		4.320.000
	Commitment	2.060.994	2.117.000		4.177.994
	Final Grant	1.799.825	1.934.660		3.734.485
2012¹⁷	AWP budget	2.330.000	2.330.000	2.330.000	6.990.000
	Commitment	2.077.526	2.173.324	1.944.451	6.195.301
	Final Grant	1.753.549	2.016.816	1.187.289	4.957.653
2013	AWP budget	2.400.000	2.400.000		4.800.000
	Commitment	2.037.893	2.236.430	-	4.274.323
	Final Grant	1.660.847	1.982.749		3.643.597
2014	AWP budget	2.400.000	2.400.000	1.500.000	6.300.000
	Commitment	1.991.470	2.170.890	846.807	5.009.167
	Final Grant	1.639.584	1.922.475	639.644	4.201.703
Total	AWP budget	11.350.000	11.570.000	3.830.000	26.750.000
	Commitment	10.144.289	10.845.649	2.791.258	23.781.196
	Final Grant	8.604.521	9.822.417	1.826.933	20.253.871
% unused funds over AWP		24%	15%	52%	24%
% unused funds over commitment		15%	9%	35%	15%

Under-consumption of Erasmus+ since 2010:

- on average 24% of the amount allocated though the programme has been unused (through countries not applying for an action, or applying for less funding that allocated).
- on average 15% of the amounts allocated to the operation of the national centres has been unspent by the centres.

Funding for national centres (2017 – 2018):

Erasmus+ Grants	Group	€
2016	EQF-NCPs	2.500.000 ¹⁸
	National Europass Centres	2.400.000
	National Euroguidance Centres	2.400.000
Foreseen for 2017 - 2018	Operation of Policy Networks	13.300.000

Upcoming co-financing for the national centres has been envisaged to cover two years 2017 – 2018 of activities (to-date funding has been allocated on an annual basis). Such a move has been requested by national centres and will allow for more effective longer term planning.

¹⁷ For EQF NCP the budget was for 2012/2013

¹⁸ Including grants for work on qualifications databases.