



EQF: a tool for sectors?

The view from Cedefop

Sports Sector Conference, Brussels 15-16 December 2008
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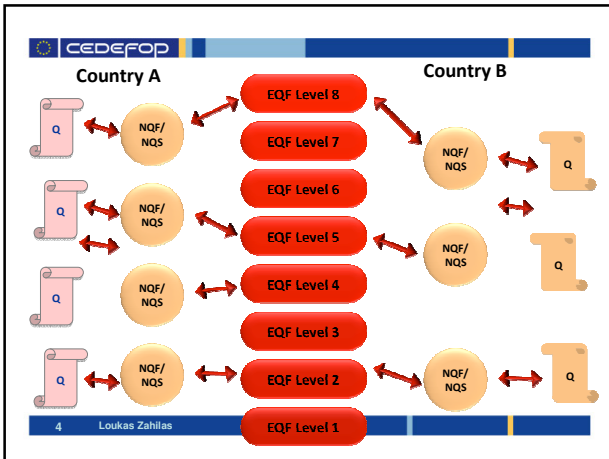
Outline

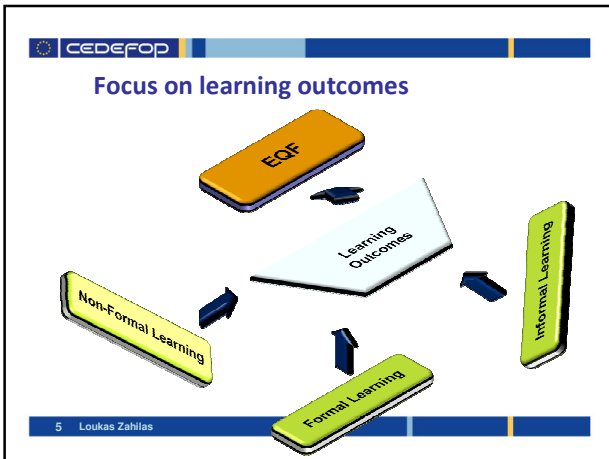
- a) EU policy context
- b) Our conceptual perspective and aims
- c) Our studies and activities
- d) Leonardo da Vinci projects

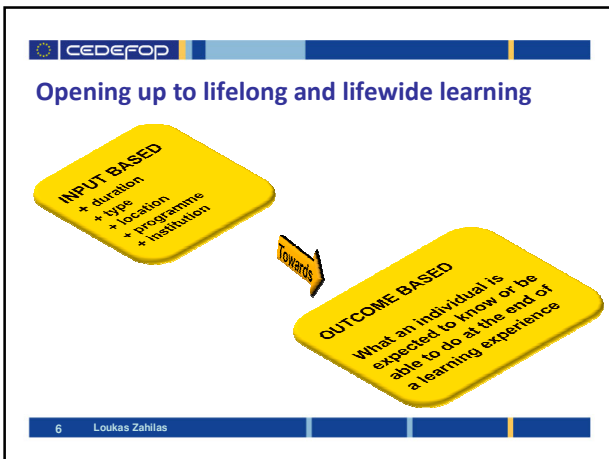


a) EU policy context: focus on qualifications

- Lisbon strategy (2000). Increased transparency of qualifications to adapt training systems to knowledge society
- Council Resolution on LLL (2002). Develop a framework for the recognition of qualifications for education and training
- Copenhagen Declaration (2002). Promote transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of qualifications
- Renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs (2008-2010). Recognition of qualifications as incentive for individuals to lifelong upskilling.







Where do we stand?

- 23 April 2008; Formal signing of the EQF Recommendation by the Presidents of the European Parliament and the European Council
- 2010; Countries invited to refer national qualifications levels to the EQF
- 2012; Countries invited to introduce reference to EQF in certificates and diplomas

EQF is based on a Recommendation- therefore a voluntary process

Overarching National Qualifications Frameworks in Europe

Existing NQFs: Ireland, UK (England, Scotland and Wales), France, Malta

Developing: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Turkey, Cyprus

Consideration: Greece, Sweden, Norway, Iceland

National Qualifications Frameworks developments outside Europe

All candidate and pre-accession countries are working on NQFs:

Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia

Significant interest in NQF development – and their relation to the EQF – outside EU;

Russia, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, China etc

Common features in European NQF developments

- Learning outcomes are used as a basis for classifying and describing levels
- Quality assurance is a major concern
- Big majority of countries link NQFs to the validation of non-formal learning
- Significant number of countries use 8 level structure
- A number of countries have established inventories of national qualifications

b) Our perspective and aims

Qualification

A qualification is the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process, obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

(EQF Recommendation 2008)

The character/function of qualifications is changing

- Is their influence and value increasing?
- Is their influence and value decreasing?
- National-based qualifications systems vs. internationalisation / globalisation / lifelong learning

Our aim

- Understand current developments and ‘open up the black box of qualifications’
- Help to implement and combine more easily EU and national tools and initiatives
- Strengthen our ability to support directly the Commission and Member States efforts towards learning outcomes based policies and practices
- Provide an input to the post 2010 strategy on education and training

c) Studies and activities

The shift to learning outcomes in European education and training policies and practices



A qualification is the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved **learning outcomes** to given standards

The first overview over European developments in this field – 32 countries

Key findings

- Conceptual clarification of LO
- LO play a crucial role in national education and training reforms
- LO is increasingly influencing teaching, learning and assessment

Sectors

The relation between sectoral qualifications and the EQF



A qualification is the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process obtained when a **competent body** determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards

Comparative study – 8 sectors

EQF as a EU reference point for all qualifications, included those awarded by sectoral stakeholders

How to build and ensure mutual trust between national, international, private and public stakeholders

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Standards

The dynamics of qualifications – the definition and renewal of occupational and educational standards

A qualification is the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given **standards**

Linking labour market and education/training systems
– 32 countries

Key messages

- Diversity of standard types and terminology
- Development and renewal of standards a crucial part of education and training policies
- Standards illustrates in a concentrated form the dialogue (or lacking dialogue) between education/training systems and the labour market

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Theoretical background

Basic assumption: The labour market and the VET system are two interrelated subsystems of society.

How can qualification standards be used to improve the coordination?

Coordination mechanisms:

1. Standardisation
2. Outcome-orientation
3. Methods of work analysis
4. Stakeholder participation
5. Flexibility mechanisms

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The changing role of qualifications

An overarching / synthesis project

The changing roles of qualifications – Towards lifelong recognition

A qualification is the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards

Comparative study
– 32 countries

- Clarify the changing roles of qualifications
- What is the link between qualifications and realising lifelong learning
- How can qualifications be developed in the tension between the national and the international, the public and the private?

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d) Leonardo da Vinci projects

Two main questions

How can national qualifications systems link up to the EQF and how can we solve the challenges of learning outcomes, National Qualifications Frameworks and best fit?

How can the EQF serve the interests and needs of sectors, enterprises and to what extent can the EQF become a reference point for all qualifications, irrespective of their institutional or geographic origin?

Reflections

Common ways to define, design and categorise qualifications are needed to increase transparency

- EQF descriptors constitute a common basis for cooperation and comparison
- Need to focus on analysis and research to strengthen mutual trust and quality assurance in the referencing process
- Common ways to describe and categorise qualifications should be developed
- Common best cases should be identified to illustrate the referencing process for different qualifications categories and levels

Reflections

Common approaches / prototypes should be developed for identifying and defining learning outcomes

While we are lacking a generalised method for identifying and defining learning outcomes, several interesting approaches have been developed and tested, showing how stepwise identification and definition of learning outcomes is possible

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Reflections

Need for a common language to establish zones of mutual trust

The work on terminology included in the EQF Recommendation should be continued and taken forward. We should agree on additional terms which have become relevant during the test and pilot stage and build on the glossaries produced from the projects to move forward to a more comprehensive EQF-NQF-SQF glossary

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The way forward

Direct input to the **post 2010 strategy** on education and training

Draft Communication on an updated strategic framework for EU cooperation in education and training

Strategic challenge: making LLL and learner mobility a reality

Priority themes 2009-10

... "support the use of an approach based on learning outcomes for standards and qualifications, assessment and validation procedures, credit transfer, curricula and quality assurance"...

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