



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

15-16 March 2018, Brussels

Workshop 4

How can qualifications frameworks support the recognition of qualifications?

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was set up in 2008 as a common reference framework serving as a translation grid between different qualifications systems, with the purpose of improving the transparency, comparability and portability of qualifications. The revised EQF Recommendation of 2017 states that the EQF and the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) or systems referenced to it can support recognition by strengthening mutual trust and making qualifications easier to understand and compare.

The EQF and the NQFs serve as information tools for recognition practices, as also acknowledged in the Recommendation on the use of qualifications frameworks in the recognition of foreign qualifications (subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention) which suggests that:

- competent recognition authorities, and the ENIC Network, should develop a common understanding on how to use national, European or other overarching qualifications frameworks for the purpose of facilitating the fair recognition of qualifications and should identify the opportunities and challenges they present;
- qualifications frameworks should be used to make it easier for competent recognition authorities to assess foreign qualifications; and
- qualifications frameworks should be used while considering the five key elements in recognition: level, learning outcomes, quality, workload and profile.

Recognition of qualifications remains high on the EU political agenda and is now more visible than ever. In the context of the Gothenburg Social Summit of November 2017, the Commission issued a Communication on "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture" in which it proposed the setting up of a European Education Area by 2025. One of the planned actions under that Area is an initiative on the mutual recognition of higher education and school leaving qualifications.

The purpose of this workshop is to discuss from different angles the way in which qualifications frameworks (and other transparency tools) can support the recognition of qualifications. The three workshop rounds will be introduced by presentations addressing the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its recommendation on the use of qualifications frameworks for recognition under it, the perspective of ENIC-NARIC and the perspective of an admission officer. It will also look at guidance for recognition (such as through the European Area of Recognition Manual). Further inputs will be given from a national perspective in the context of cross border cooperation.

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

- 1) What does experience suggest regarding the opportunities and limitations of the use of qualifications frameworks to facilitate the recognition of qualifications?
- 2) Do qualifications frameworks generate sufficient transparency and trust to make them suitable tools to support recognition? How could they be improved, or complemented by other tools?
- 3) To what extent does the learning outcomes approach facilitate recognition decisions?