

The Changing Role of
Qualifications in Governing the
Labour Market
Working Group 2: International
Qualifications

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Overview of presented topics

- Introduction of the study “International Qualifications”, Loukas Zahilas (Cedefop)
- International qualifications and the EQF developments, Jeff Bridgford (King’s College London)
- International qualifications and ESCO, Tormod Skjerve (Norway)
- International qualifications in the welding sector, Luisa Coutinho (EWF)
- International Qualifications in the financial sector, Peter Szovics (Institute of banking education)
- Qualifications in the agriculture, Andre Huigens (Wellantcollege)

Introduction of the study

“International Qualifications”,

- Outlined the main parameters for the analysis and development of international qualifications in the sectors as well as the approaches of research applied in the study.
- There were indicated challenges related to the lack of information about the international qualifications and difficulties in the identification of these qualifications in the sectors.

International qualifications and the EQF developments

- Support of EC to international sectoral organisations in developing international qualifications and, particularly, in the development of know-how and expertise of the stakeholders in this field.
- Problems in linking the existing international qualifications with the EQF methodology.

International qualifications and the EQF developments

- Scenarios of referencing international sectoral qualifications to the EQF
- Challenges of referencing in these scenarios: volume of referencing activities, unclear responsibilities of actors, funding issues, relations and referencing to the NQFs.

International qualifications and ESCO

- Aim, objectives and functions of ESCO
- Structured terminology and multilingual classification of occupations, skills, competences and qualifications;
- ESCO reference groups in five sectors
- Links to the establishment of European Sector Skills Councils
- Responding to the European policies

International qualifications and ESCO

- Data model - elements of typology:
- Problems of common definition of learning outcomes.
- Cooperation with mediating organisations in the field of promotion and awareness raising.
- Instrument providing the vision on the prospects of education and attracting youth to employment and labour market.

International qualifications in the welding sector

- Main features of welding sector and their impact to related qualifications.
- Awarding of the international diploma of welders.
- Qualifications levels of welders - 3 levels according to complexity of operations.
- Harmonised training guidelines.
- Quality assurance system.
- Role of authorised national bodies in the countries.
- Reference of issued certificates and diploma to the other international standards and to the EQF.

International Qualifications in the financial sector

- Outcomes based European Foundation Certificate in Banking.
- Standard examination model.
- Standard accreditation model.
- Competing international qualifications in the financial sector.

Qualifications in the sector of agriculture

- Absence of vocational education in the EQF levels 1-2-3 in many countries.
- Presentation of the EQUFAS-framework providing clear operationalisation of the EQF levels in terms of 4 domains and 10 dimensions.
- Ruler of the EQF learning outcome description.
- Application of the EQF structuring of qualifications in the human resource management and development in enterprises.

Which are necessary data categories when developing an overview of what exists and emerges in the area of international qualifications?

<i>ESCO</i>	<i>Data model 'International qualifications'</i>
Exact title of qualification	
Qualification group	
Awarding body	Competent body
Area of use/working environment	Purpose
Geographical and institutional coverage	Coverage
Relationship to occupation	Currency
Relationships to skills and competences	Type

Which are the quality issues related to the accountability and openness of the processes leading to international qualifications?

- Concern and potential threat caused by the provision of international qualifications through joint training and study programmes, on-line programmes, etc. How to assure the quality of these qualifications?
- Limitation of international qualifications is their recognition only in the sectors where they are developed. Recognition of international sectoral qualification in the countries is still unresolved question.

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- Lack of know-how and capacities of sectoral organisations in the design and development of international qualifications.
- The main decision makers in referencing of sectoral qualifications to the levels of NQFs and EQF in majority are not experts of the related occupational field.
- Lack of quality assurance system and mechanisms for referencing process.
- Differences of interpretation of the QFs and their elements amongst the national and sectoral stakeholders.
- Position of the employers and enterprises towards the provision of international sectoral qualifications and their involvement in this process.

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- Application of the international standards and quality assurance instruments (ISO, other) in the quality assurance of international qualifications.
- Legal requirement for the international qualifications in executing (performing) different activities.

Which can be the role of sectors in promoting the required trust and the labour market value?

- Capacity building of sectoral stakeholders in the field of design, awarding and management of international qualifications.
- Promotion of the international qualifications through the measures of human resource development, career design and management in the sectors, enterprises, E&T institutions.
- Active and strong participation in the referencing of sectoral qualifications to the EQF and NQFs.
- Direct involvement and active voice of sectoral stakeholders in the implementation of the EQF.

Conclusions

- International qualifications become very important instruments helping to deal with the challenges of internationalisation and globalisation of the labour market and E&T.
- Introduction of international qualifications creates big challenges for the referencing of qualifications to the NQFs and the EQF and for the development of the national systems of qualifications.
- Development of the NQFs will inevitably cause further discussions in the countries regarding development of international sectoral qualifications. It should facilitate the search of constructive solutions of above mentioned problems.