



## RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATION IN EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL CONTEXTS

### Summarize Guide





**EU-DAIRY - WP 3: Comparative analysis**  
**Executive summary of the comparative study**

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## 1. THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The European Council came to the conclusion, during its meeting in Lisbon in 2000, that greater transparency in qualification and lifelong learning should be the two main issues in the efforts of adapting the European educational systems and professional preparation to the demands of knowledge based societies and the need of more and better quality employment opportunities. Further discussions and developments led to the creation of a key instrument for supporting lifelong learning, namely the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

### CURRENT SITUATION IN THE EQF IMPLEMENTATION

The European Parliament and European Board recommended to the member states, amongst other measures stipulated in the accepted proposal, to:

- Use the European Qualifications Framework as a reference tool to compare the qualification levels of the different qualifications systems and to promote both lifelong learning and equal opportunities in the knowledge-based society, as well as the further integration of the European labour market, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems.
- Adopt measures, as appropriate, so that, by 2012, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and "Europass" documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level.
- Use an approach based on learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications, and promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning in accordance with the common European principles agreed in the Council conclusions of 28 May 2004, paying particular attention to those citizens most likely to be subject to unemployment or insecure forms of employment, for whom such an approach could help increase participation in lifelong learning and access to the labour market.
- Promote and apply the principles of quality assurance in education and training when relating higher education and vocational education and training qualifications within national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework.
- Designate national coordination points, linked to the particular structures and requirements of the Member States, to support and, in conjunction with other relevant national authorities, to guide the relationship between the national qualifications system and the European Qualifications Framework, in order to promote the quality and transparency of that relationship.
- The tasks of those national coordination points should include:



- referencing levels of qualifications within national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework levels and
- ensuring that a transparent methodology is used to refer national qualifications levels to the European Qualifications Framework in order to facilitate comparisons between them, and ensuring that the resulting decisions are published.



## 2. RESULTS OF THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

### NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL SYSTEM AND SITUATION IN DAIRY SECTOR

Sixteen sections illustrate different views of the problem and serve to mutual comparison among European countries with various educational systems. Firstly, a comparison of educational systems as well as current situation in dairy sector should be done; it is provided in following comparison tables.

The aims and effort of the systems are to give national education systems and other educational bodies functioning instruments for promotion and development of vocational education and training, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of long-life education beyond the traditional educational period, to promote the freedom of movement for workers and thus facilitate the adoption of supply and demand on the labour market in the Europe. The aims are formulated as follow:

- 1) Comparability of learning outcomes acquired by various forms of learning and education.
- 2) Achieving full qualification by combining partial qualifications.
- 3) Transfer of employment market requirements in the area of education.
- 4) Public awareness of nation wide recognised qualifications.
- 5) Adjustment of qualification levels in all European countries.

Each country found the system of qualifications on the base of traditional educational systems with respect to national specifics. Thus the formal structure of national qualification systems differs. Although systems differ in involved states the content and framework is relevant EU requirements and mutually comparable. Frameworks are foundations for the implementation of transparency, accessibility, development and quality of qualifications in relation to the employment market and civic society.

## NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL SYSTEM

	Czech	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Spain
General educational system	<p>Secondary education - upper secondary general schools and upper secondary technical schools.</p> <p>Higher education - Bologna Declaration - Bachelor, Master and Doctoral studies.</p> <p>Other forms of tertiary education - short types of study with a vocational or recreational orientation.</p>	<p>The Formal Education - well-organised state or private institutions. Many universities have established Life-Long Learning Institutes.</p> <p>There is a big initiative for harmonisation/ unification/ rationalisation and links with production of the two main systems (ME vs. MSA).</p>	<p>The vocational training institutes depend on the Office of the education with diversified formality on the base of the juridical form. The radical reform ought to help to limit dropping out and excessive duration of studies and could contribute to an increase in the number of graduates, favouring the entry in the market of the job of the graduates.</p>	<p>The Education Training can be divided into three subsequent steps: Compulsory Education, Upper-Secondary Education and Higher Education (with also Non-higher post upper-secondary education). Bologna Declaration is applied in higher education.</p>	<p>Compulsory secondary education and post-compulsory secondary education. University education is in concordance with Bologna Declaration.</p> <p>National Professional Qualifications Board plays key role in constitute respectively intermediate level and higher level vocational training.</p>

<b>Influence of NQS onto national educational system</b>	<p>Especially for secondary high schools. Complete qualification may be attained yet only in the school where the applicant will pass an examination.</p> <p>Authorized persons for verification of partial qualifications must provide such qualifications in their study programmes.</p>	<p>The NQS as implemented to date has focused on the acquisition of accredited qualifications via the formal education process. The other possibility is in implementation of self financed programmes by enterprises for their employees.</p>	<p>Underwent great transformations in both nature and functions. Community principles and policies on the subject of education and training, as well as with the EOS, have been conclusive to promote and guarantee the lifelong learning throughout the whole lifetime.</p>	<p>No relevant data.</p>	<p>The NCPO is the basis upon which is developed the training offer aimed to obtain the VET Diplomas, Certificates of Professional Standards. NQS and VET contribute to the spreading of the training offer bounded to the competence units.</p>
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<b>Influence of NQS onto educational programmes</b>	<p>NQS is slowly becoming a platform for designing educational programmes. The system basis of relating the aims and content of educational programmes with the requirements of the labour market is that the standards of qualification are, as a part of NQS, created in concert with social partners.</p>	<p>At a pilot phase through training/ educational projects (ESF, EQUAL). Impact on disadvantaged social groups and social groups with a particular cultural and language identity into the education system.</p> <p>The NQS is new in Greece. The first set of NQS has been adopted in December 2008. They also preview analytically training units necessary for the acquisition of each NVQ.</p>	<p>Not relevant, NQS is not implemented now.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education grants equivalence or recognition of qualifications, studies and diplomas of foreign education systems to Portuguese qualifications, studies and diplomas at basic and secondary education level.</p>	<p>The SNCFP objectives are to adapt the VET to the qualification demands of productive organizations. The learning module of the Modular Catalogue of Vocational Education and Training is a coherent education and training block related to each of the competence units.</p>
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<b>Results</b>	<p>The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth endorsed the first qualification and evaluation standards in 2007. Complete register of partial qualification is available at <a href="http://www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz">www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz</a>. Accepted partial qualifications are also described in the information system of the NQS at the same address.</p>	<p>Recognition of qualifications is realized through all formal, non-formal and in-formal education. The professional rights of 37 professions have been included in draft Presidential Decrees for the professional rights of graduates of IEK. Certificates issued by agencies providing non-formal vocational education and training are not officially accredited for the purpose of certifying qualifications.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, the formal education system does not often provide young people with a sufficient store of knowledge to meet their needs. Non-formal education is one of these, in particular, but not exclusively, for young people with fewer opportunities. In non-formal or vocational education certification is usually given at the end of the training period, to evaluate the level of practical skills acquired.</p>	<p>Three stages: (i) recognition and validation of the trainees' prior acquired skills and competences, (ii) formative assessment and (iii) summative assessment, as a synthesis and consequence of the conjugation of all the stages and instruments of assessment used throughout a determined training process, based on decisions about the certification of the trainees.</p>	<p>Only experimental working with system of qualifications recognition. The process is usually the same: information, enrolment, assessment, evaluation and certification. For now there are no proceeding to authorize both the institutions and persons to recognize competences; only experimental process is being carried out.</p>
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<b>National specifics, other relevant information</b>	<p>Now, there are 58 partial qualifications, 20 authorized persons and 14 sector boards presented in the web <a href="http://www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz">www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz</a>. NQS project has elaborated qualification and assessment standards of 92 complete and 320 partial qualifications. More than 100 partial qualifications relevant to 7 professional occupations, e.g. waiter, baker, hairdresser is being tested in 2008.</p>	<p>The Greek comment is that the procedure of developing NQS is now taking place, taking into account the EU system and guidelines.</p>	<p>The Italian recommendation is that it would be advisable to clarify, whether in the NQS of the various countries, all three indicators laid down in the EQF are required for a qualification to be placed at a given level: knowledge, technical skills and transverse skills. It should be integral part of comparative study and it is reflected by the table above.</p>	<p>The major initiatives on implementation of NQS in Portugal are still in the beginning and there is no other relevant information on this subject.</p>	<p>Future law that regulates the procedure to recognize, assess, accredit and register the professional qualifications will consider the possibility that workers have knowledge not contemplated in the CNCP due to the training received in their enterprises.</p> <p>In this moment the INCUAL is just developing qualifications of level 1, 2 and 3. Right now there exist 390 qualifications approved by the Council of Ministers published in the Spanish State Official Journal.</p>
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## SITUATION IN DAIRY SECTOR

	Czech	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Spain
<b>Situation of the labour market in the dairy sector</b>	Negative trend of number of people employed in dairy sector due the consequences of CAP. Work affected significant increase because of such decreasing number of employees.	No labour problems in the dairy producing industry. The dairy enterprises have not left Greece. New companies are founded so that the total number of workers in the branch is increased.  NVQs in Greece are compiled jointly by the social partners (employers/employees) at the third level (Confederations).	The sector is mainly broken down into three separate organisational systems: farming, middle-level and industrial cooperative of the artisanal type and industrial. Relations between employers and workers vary according to the sizes of the farms.	A large percentage of milk and dairy sector workers acquire professional qualifications through the informal training. The professional categories: technical and production groups and administrative and commercial groups.	Workers acquire their professional skills through the informal training.  The professional categories: technical groups; administrative and commercial; production group and assistant tasks.
<b>Existing qualifications in dairy sector</b>	Full and partial qualifications in dairy sector are not determined by professions, but by operations in production process. Only three universal partial qualifications exist: input operations, production operations, distributions.	Most managers are University or TEI (Technical Educational Institutes) graduates. Technicians and workers are mostly graduates of TEE (Technical Vocational School). Mainly training is provided by the companies or the mechanical equipment suppliers and by older technicians and	NQS classification has three levels: Professional groups, Professions and detailed items. On the whole, at present the NQS foresees 32 occupational groups, 569 occupations, 6761 items.	There are several professional qualifications related with dairy sector, for example:  Appointed - Manufacture of Milk Products 8.2.7.2.80  Operator Concentration - Milk 8.2.7.2.20  Sterilization Operator	There are three professional qualifications typical of the dairy sector. The examples are:  Dairy Industries, level 3  Cheese factory, level 2  Production of consumer milk and dairy products, level 2

	Some “free” partial qualifications (ice-cream producer) are defined.	workers through mentoring.		- Milk 8.2.7.2.15	
<b>Professional education in the dairy sector</b>	For direct education of dairying, there is only one school which offers directly assigned professional education in milk processing. For indirect education of dairying, there are 19 secondary technical and/or vocational school oriented to food processing and food industry.	For education directly linked with dairy products production, there are only two schools which offer directly assigned professional education related to milk processing.  For Education indirectly linked with dairy products production, there are 2 Universities and 3 Technological Education Institutes (TEI).	A Dairy-products Processor is capable of producing fresh and ripe cheese products, using specific methods and technologies during the different processing phases. This qualification can be regarded both as a qualification for access to the professional area and as a qualification of technical-specialisation studies.	Education indirectly linked to dairy (milk processing is part of the courses) is offered on three types of schools: non-higher post upper-secondary education with technological specialisation courses, higher education polytechnics and higher education universities.	The training directly related to the dairy sector is the one corresponding to the intermediate level of vocational training “Production of dairy products”. In the higher level, there exists secondary education training indirectly related to the dairy sector of the “Food and Beverage Industry”.
<b>Product classification in dairy sector</b>	The Standard International Trade Classification (SITC).	The Eurostat Prodcom Code.	Several groups of dairy products are classified: industrial production, cheese products by type of cheese, cheese products by type of milk.	The classification of products from dairy sector are still in revision. Only some provisory list of products is available.	CPA-2002 (National Classification of Products in Activities)

## NATIONAL QUALIFICATION SYSTEMS IN INVOLVED COUNTRIES

Following tables provide detailed information about implementation of National Qualification Systems in selected European countries: Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

National qualification frameworks (NQFs) are instruments of classification focused on qualification, according to a set of criteria referring to a specific level of achieved learning outcomes. Some important concepts *related to the specifics* of the country are largely based on current legislation.

National qualification frameworks are usually implemented through National qualification systems, which are more specific than frameworks. They are based on definitions of *standards*.

The standards of the NQSs are developed to work with *knowledge, skills and competencies* in close relationship with learning outcomes. Focus on learning outcomes represents a fundamental principle in all involved countries, surely in the European context and increasingly in other European countries. In this connection it is quite important to note that this principle *is being implemented naturally* and without undue pressure and asserting itself as truly basic, in the full scope of its implication – from legal recognition of the results of further education to initiating curricular reforms for basic professional education leading to secondary or high school qualification. Thus, in all involved countries it will be a rather long-term process.

	<b>Czech</b>	<b>Greece</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Spain</b>
<b>Background of NQS</b>	Traditional system of qualifications based on formal education, doubts about new forms of education, harmonization with EU.	Training and professional experiences are provided by various bodies; there is no specialized national agency. The new NQS initiative is undertaken by EKEPIS, the National certification Centre, which is supervised by the Ministry of Labour.	The process is in the first step. The effort (from 2007) is to develop "National System of Minimum Professional, Certification and Training Standards" to be in concordance with EU requests.	The process of NQS application is in the beginning, formally started in the end of 2007.	SNCFP - fully developed scheme for assessing and accrediting professional competences.
<b>Formal structure of NQS</b>	Based on hierarchical structure complete and partial qualifications. Recognized by qualification and assessment standards.	Vocational education and training are yet not officially accredited for the purpose of certifying qualifications.  On the other hand the whole effort for the development of the NQS is a part of a greater initiative for harmonisation of vocational education and training provided/supervised by the Ministries of Education and Labour	General rules that must always be followed are now available only. The qualifications reenter in "Professional Group", "Professions" and detailed items.	Hierarchical structure of NQS is proposed: The National Qualifications Framework -> National Qualifications Catalogue -> The Individual Booklet of Competences.	SNCFP is based on hierarchical structure. National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications arranges the professional qualifications according to competences.

		involving all social partners (ESSEEKA-National System for Continuous Vocational Education and Training)			
<b>National projects</b>	Systemic project that covers both developing NQS and developing recognition of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning in school networks.	Non-formal education is supported by ESF as Community Framework Programmes II – IV. ESSEEKA framework system aims at matching personal and social needs of individuals as well as needs of the labour market.	Reliable data does not exist. The development of qualification frameworks in the country has so far been mainly a verbal exercise for promoting the concept.	New Opportunities project is mentioned. The project has two main pillars: addressing the low levels of schooling among young people and raise the basic qualification levels of the adult population.	ERA is an experimental project related to the NQS for the evaluation, recognition and accreditation of professional competences. Projects (non-formal education) funded by ESF.
<b>Problems and risks</b>	Ad-hoc, non consistent regulations, the creation of an NQS implies many organisational measures and requires important financial means and connected possibility of undue competition.	Standard risks and problems in the implementation phase (only parts of ESSEEKA are operational, and there are NVQs for a limited number of professions only): there is still in some cases duplication of resources spent and difficulty of co-operation among institutions and	Requirements are known only: the need to establish and use a shared language; the need to fix minimum reference standards; recognition and certification standards, in order to ensure effective communication between the education, training and employment systems and flexibility in the supply of	No relevant data. Methodology is suggested well but there are not experiences with implementation.	The link between qualifications with collective negotiation and the professional ranking. Insufficient cooperation of employer organizations that implies the problems with acceptance of learning outcomes through companies.

		among programmes.	education and training.		
<b>Objectives and learning outcomes</b>	Qualifications described according to a simple set of criteria oriented on learning outcomes expressed independently form place and means of acquisition or attainment.	Connected with ESF objectives and outcomes, support to both sides of the labour market, especially for the young, disabled or disadvantaged persons and/or for those that are threatened by social exclusion.	Improving the coherence of a particular system of national qualification by proposing a qualifications structure. To make individual qualifications more transferable. To take into account formal, non-formal and informal individual learning.	To raise the basic training of the active population, enabling its educational and professional progress, to guarantee that the professional courses of young persons confer double certification: educational and professional and reinforce and consolidate the process of recognition, validation and certification of skills.	Modular Catalogue of Vocational Education and Training, which consists of all the learning modules. The National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications makes possible evaluate and accredit the worker in each one of the units of competence.

One of the most important results of the comparative study is identification of professional qualifications in dairy sector in all countries. Thus, the detailed comparison for section 12 is useful to be provided again. Now, it no use differentiating between existing and planned qualifications as well as between full/partial qualifications or qualifications/competence units; this is subject to utilization of complex methodology in IN\_DAIRY tool used for pilot mapping and experiments with such categories.

Existing/planned professional qualification				
Czech Republic <sup>1</sup>	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Spain
Input operations	Still not specified	Cheese Expert	Not specified in dairy sector but for the food sector	Dairy Industries
Production operations		Agro-Industrial Cheese Operator		Cheese factory
Distributions		Dairy-Cheese Agro-technician		Production of consumer milk and dairy products
				Auxiliary operations for elaboration in the food and beverage industry

<sup>1</sup>Complete list of professional qualifications

For final decision about source of qualifications that worth mapping see following table:

	EQS implemented	National catalogue of qualifications exists	Qualifications in dairy sector are established
<b>Czech Republic</b>	yes	yes	no
<b>Greece</b>	no	yes	no
<b>Italy</b>	no	yes	yes
<b>Portugal</b>	no	yes	yes



<b>Spain</b>	no	yes	yes
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Although there is advanced implementation of EQS in Czech Republic and the system for recognition of qualifications is working in several areas, it cannot be used in dairy sector because of pure complete official list of qualification. It is better to use hierarchy of qualifications from Spanish National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications or even to use hierarchy of qualifications as suggested in Portugal (see full Comparative study, pages 62-69). Although such systems are not working now, definition of professional qualification (e.g. called "competence units" in Spain) in dairy sector is well done and as is could be used for DAIRY-EU project purposes; pilot experiments using IN\_DAIRY tool environment.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Lifelong learning is constantly gaining importance. It is manifested in so many forms that employers, as well as the general public, can nowadays hardly keep track of all the changes. The only elements that allow clear understanding are learning outcomes. With their help it is possible to compare various forms of learning and education. Learning outcomes represent the most important source of information for employers, as to what prospective candidates really know about a particular job position. Therefore, a description of qualifications by means of learning outcomes should be one of the basic conditions for ensuring that the candidate's actual professional competencies and skills may be recognised, regardless the ways and means by which these have been achieved.

The most important aspect of the NQS implementation process is the professional competency of the authorising agents (persons). The evaluation standard sets the requirements for professional competency of the authorising agents (persons) and for the necessary material and technical background. Evaluation standards applied until now include requirements for professional competency of authorised agents (persons) which were established on the basis of requirements of a determined level of competency, on the level of professional education and the years of practice. The Authorisation Agency can have other requirements. Basically there are three options:

#### Option 1

- Qualification prerequisites documented by supplied certificates

#### Option 2

- Qualification prerequisites documented by supplied certificates
- Manifested competency assessed through oral and written exams, without the necessity of material and technical background

#### Option 3

- Qualification prerequisites documented by supplied certificates
- Manifested competency assessed through oral and written exams, without the necessity of material and technical background
- Manifested competency which can be assessed only with the help of a relevant material and technical background (may be coupled with assessment of these material and technical backgrounds)

The whole process has to be supervised and guaranteed by national authority. The ways and methods of supervising the activities of authorising agents (persons) will be subject of agreements with the Authorisation Agencies. The National Council for Qualification will also play an important role. Also, the information subsystem listing all authorised agents (persons) represents a useful instrument.