

## NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS: THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

*This paper presents the current state of higher education in the European Union, namely the process of development and implementation of European Qualifications Frameworks with the National Qualifications Framework in member countries of the European Union. It introduces the analysis of data in all member states mostly based on the reports of the European organizations. This paper also shows that different countries have different strategies and they are on different stages of this process.*

**Keywords:** Bologna process, the European Qualifications Framework, higher education, member countries, the national qualifications framework.

**Introduction.** Many countries have been implementing national qualifications frameworks (NQF) since the Bologna Framework was first adopted in Bergen in 2005. It now involves 46 countries. The overview from 2012 shows rapid progress towards establishing and implementing NQFs and linking national qualifications to EQF levels. Twenty-eight countries have developed or are developing comprehensive NQFs covering all types and levels of qualification. But different countries have different strategies and are on a different stages of this process.

**Statement of the Problem.** Thus it's interesting to analyse the contemporary state of play of implementing NQFs in European Union. Our analysis is based mostly on the gathering data in all member states (MS) by means of researching the study of Directorate General for International Policies (2012), the survey of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2012) and the Acts on the NQF prepared by MS. This article provides an assessment of the contemporary state of play of the implementation of the EQF where we're trying to understand how NQFs are being implemented around the world.

**Review of the Literature and Research.** S. Allais in his paper writes about "the popularity of NQFs has grown dramatically in the last five years. Over 100 countries are now implementing, developing, or considering NQFs, or involved in regional qualifications frameworks. Qualifications frameworks have been widely endorsed by influential international organisations and bilateral agencies, often supported by aid money and even loans." But he evidences not only about the impacts and strengths of NQFs, but it's "weaknesses, particularly for developing countries". He also highlights the 'mismatch' between education and training systems and labour markets. (Allais S., 2011, p.10)

Michael F.D. Young also thinks that "all countries implementing NQF have faced problems. This failure may be expressed in a lack of political support or adequate resources for the agency or authority with specific responsibility for the NQF." In his research he distinguishes between political, administrative and what he shall refer to as 'technical' or professional difficulties. (Michael F.D. Young, 2011, p. 1).

In the mentioned above reports they are also agreed that "in theory the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF EHEA) are aligned" but "it needs to be assessed whether in practice the existence of two frameworks does not lead to confusion." (Development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe, 2011, p. 6)

**Presentation of the Work. What is the difference between QF EHEA, EQF and NQFs?** The QF EHEA was adopted in the context of the Bologna Process in 2005 (47 European ministers agreed to participate in the Bologna process). It consists of three cycles: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate. Each cycle is described in terms of learning outcomes as defined according to the so-called "Dublin descriptors". The descriptors for the three cycles within the QF EHEA are comparable to the level descriptors of level 6, 7 and 8 of the EQF. There is a close cooperation between the organisations responsible for the implementation of the two frameworks (Council of Europe for the QF EHEA and the European Commission for the EQF).

The EQF for lifelong learning is an instrument, established within the context of the European cooperation in the field of Education and Training, aimed at promoting workers' and learners' mobility and lifelong learning. The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 (2008/C111/01) on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning invites MS to implement the EQF and to reference their NQF or systems to the appropriate EQF level by 2011-2012. (State of play of the European Qualifications Framework implementation, 2012, p. 24)

Diagrammatically, the relationship between the Bologna Framework and the EQF may be illustrated as follows:

EQF	Bologna Framework
1	
2	
3	
4	

5	*
6	First Cycle
7	Second Cycle
8	Third Cycle

Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualifications levels of different countries and different education and training systems. This leads to increased labour mobility between countries, mobility between education systems and increased opportunities for lifelong learning.

See: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm)

As mentioned, in 2005 already Heads of Government requested the creation of the EQF. Consequently, all countries were involved in the preparatory phase of the EQF before the 2008 Recommendation by means of consultation rounds, studies and national discussions on developing NQFs. The process of linking national qualifications levels becomes complicated. Some countries originally sceptical of the value of NQFs, for example Finland and Norway, have embraced the concept and are now actively involved in their development and implementation. (Development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe, 2011, p.9)

Although all MS were involved, differences exist between countries concerning the breadth and depth of this preparatory political involvement. In most countries the involvement remained at different levels. According to of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (State of play of the European Qualifications Framework implementation, 2012, p.42-43) there are three levels of NQFs implementations:

- Countries at an advanced stage already having established qualifications frameworks and advanced in describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes (FR, IE, MT, UK);
- Countries at intermediate stage not having comprehensive qualifications frameworks, but generally, qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes (or similar) (CZ, DK, FI, IS, NL, NO, PT, ES, SE);
- Countries at an initial stage not having comprehensive qualifications frameworks and qualifications are not yet described in terms of learning outcomes (AT, BE, BG, HR, CY, EE, DE, EL, HU, IT, LV, LT, LU, PL, RO, SK, SI, TK).

This analysis shows that countries have largely completed the conceptualisation/design and consultation/testing stages and are moving into early implementation. Alongside Ireland, France, Malta and the UK – considered as implemented frameworks – ten other countries are now at an early stage.

#### Short overview of the NQF developments

№	Names of the Countries	Stage of the adoption
1	Austria	Eight levels are adopted
2	Belgium (Flanders)	Eight levels have been adopted
3	Belgium (Wallonia)	Eight levels are proposed
4	Bulgaria	Eight levels are proposed
5	Croatia	Eight levels with additional sublevels at 4,5, 7 and 8 are adopted
6	Cyprus	Eight levels are proposed
7	Czech Republic	Eight levels are adopted
8	Denmark	Eight levels have been agreed
9	Estonia	Eight levels are adopted
10	Finland	Eight levels have been agreed
11	France	eight-level structure is being considered, possibly towards the end of 2012
12	Germany	Eight levels are proposed
13	Greece	Eight levels are adopted
14	Hungary	Eight-level structure is proposed
15	Iceland	Seven levels are proposed
16	Ireland	Ten levels are adopted
17	Italy	The number of levels has not been defined yet
18	Latvia	Eight-level structure was introduced
19	Liechtenstein	Not decided yet
20	Lithuania	Eight levels are adopted
21	Luxembourg	Eight levels have been agreed
22	Malta	Eight levels are adopted

23	Montenegro	Eight levels are adopted with sublevels at levels 1, 4 and 7
24	The Netherlands	Eight levels and one entry level has been adopted
25	Norway	Seven levels
26	Poland	An eight-level Polish NQF is proposed
27	Portugal	Eight levels are adopted
28	Romania	Eight levels have been proposed
29	Slovakia	Eight levels were proposed
30	Slovenia	Ten levels are proposed
31	Spain	Eight levels are proposed
32	Sweden	Eight level structure was proposed
33	FYROM	Eight levels with a number of sub-levels are proposed
34	Turkey	Eight levels are proposed
35	United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland)	A nine-level structure (including entry levels) has been adopted
35 a	(Scotland)	A 12-level structure (including entry levels) has been adopted
35 b	(Wales)	A nine-level structure (including entry levels) has been adopted

Source: Author

European countries are making rapid progress in developing, adopting and implementing national qualifications frameworks. The following figures – reflecting the situation in mid – 2011 – capture these developments:

- 28 countries are developing or have developed comprehensive NQFs covering all types and levels of qualifications;
- 4 countries have still to decide the overall scope and architecture of the framework (Czech Republic, FYROM, Italy, Liechtenstein);
- In four countries (Czech Republic, France, Italy, UK-England/Northern Ireland) NQFs cover a limited range of qualification types and levels or have diverse sub-system frameworks without clearly defined links;
- 26 countries have proposed or decided on an 8-level framework, the remaining covering frameworks with 5, 7, 9, 10 and 12 levels;
- All countries use a learning outcomes based approach level descriptors;
- 14 frameworks have been formally adopted (mainly through ministerial decisions, amendments to existing education and training laws or separate NQF laws, varying according to national systems

and traditions). The are Austria Belgium (Flanders), Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), (Scotland) and (Wales);

- Only Ireland, France, Malta and the UK can be described as implemented frameworks, though 10 countries are now entering an early implementation stage. (Development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe, 2011, p.8-9)

**Conclusion.** Thus the paper shows that the two European framework initiatives, the European Qualifications framework and the Qualifications framework for the European higher education area, are working well together. All countries are at different levels of NQFs implementations – 80% (28 countries) are developing or have developed comprehensive NQFs, 40% (14 countries) have formally adopted NQFs, 74% (26 countries) have proposed an 8-level framework with sub-levels. This difference depends on national structure of higher education in member states. But inspite of the differences and complications of this process the work on the development and implementation of the NQFs continues.

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**НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ РАМКИ КВАЛИФИКАЦИЙ: СОВРЕМЕННОЕ СОСТОЯНИЕ ДЕЛ**

В статье говорится о современном состоянии развития высшего образования в Европейском Союзе, а именно о процессе согласования и адаптации Европейских рамок квалификаций с Национальными Рамками Квалификаций (НРК) в странах-членах Европейского Союза. Наш анализ основывается главным образом на данных, собранных во всех государствах-членах ЕС и приведенных Европейскими центрами и организациями.

**Ключевые слова:** Болонский процесс; высшее образование; Европейские рамки квалификаций; национальные рамки квалификаций; страны-члены ЕС.

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**НАЦІОНАЛЬНІ РАМКИ КВАЛІФІКАЦІЙ: СУЧАСНИЙ СТАН СПРАВ**

У статті йдеться про сучасний стан розвитку вищої освіти в Європейському Союзі, а саме процесу узгодження та адаптації Європейських рамок кваліфікацій з національними рамками кваліфікацій (НРК) у країнах-членах Європейського Союзу. Наш аналіз ґрунтується головним чином на даних, зібраних у всіх державах-членах і наведених Європейським центром з розвитку професійно-технічної освіти (the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2012), Генеральним директором з міжнародної політики (Directorate General for International Policies, 2012) та на основі вивчення актів з питань реалізації політики впровадження НРК (the Acts on the NQF), підготовлених різними країнами-членами ЕС. Рамки Кваліфікацій для Європейського простору вищої освіти (QF EHEA) були прийняті в контексті Болонського процесу у 2005 році (47 європейських міністрів погодилися взяти участь у Болонському процесі). Вони складаються з трьох циклів: бакалавра, магістра і докторантури. Починаючи з цього моменту ЕС було розроблено та запроваджено різні "рамки кваліфікацій": Болонські рамки кваліфікацій (Bologna Framework), Європейські рамки кваліфікацій (EQF) та Національні рамки кваліфікацій (National Qualifications Framework). Болонські рамки не враховували національної специфіки країн-членів ЄС. Тому у 2008 році згідно з Рекомендаціями Європейського парламенту і Ради країн-членів ЄС були залучені до процесу реалізації Європейських рамок кваліфікацій (EQF) та приведення своїх НРК у відповідність до ЄРК (EQF) до 2011–2012 років. Ця стаття передбачає оцінку сучасного стану справ у реалізації політики адаптації НРК і те як ця політика впроваджується у системи вищої освіти по всьому світу. Результатом вивчення матеріалів дослідження є те, що усі країни знаходяться на різних рівнях розробки та впровадження НРК у національній системі вищої освіти – 80% (28 країн) розробляють або вже розробили комплексні НРК, 40% (14 країн) офіційно прийняли НРК, 74% (26 країн) запропонували рамки 8-ми рівнів із суб-рівнями. Ця різниця залежить від національної структури вищої освіти в країнах-членах ЄС. Але, незважаючи на нерівномірність і ускладнення процесу впровадження НРК у національні системи вищої освіти країни-члени ЕС тримають курс на створення єдиного Європейського освітнього простору.

**Ключові слова:** Болонський процес; вища освіта; Європейські рамки кваліфікацій; країни-члени ЄС; національні рамки кваліфікацій.

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**Ретроспективний аналіз проблеми формування професійних цінностей вчителя**

У статті проведено ретроспективний аналіз проблеми формування професійних цінностей вчителя; прослідковано генезис розвитку стану розв'язання проблеми від часів Античності до наших днів; зроблено висновок про основоположну роль професійних цінностей у професійно-педагогічній діяльності сучасного вчителя.

**Ключові слова:** педагогічна наука; професійні цінності вчителя; професійно-педагогічна діяльність; ретроспективний аналіз.

**Вступ.** Динамічні процеси розвитку сучасного суспільства вимагають значної перебудови різних сфер життя й діяльності людини, у тому числі й сфери освіти. Зміна загальноосвітніх парадигм, широке використання нових інформаційних технологій, застосування інноваційних форм