

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning

2006/0163(COD) - 22/05/2017 - Corrigendum to final act

ACT: Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and **repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008** on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

BACKGROUND: the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 establishing the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (see the summary of the final act dated 23.4.2008) created a common frame of reference that includes 8 reference levels expressed as learning outcomes with increasing levels of proficiency. **These levels serve as a translation device between different national systems and levels of certification.**

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) aims to improve the transparency, comparability and transferability of qualifications awarded.

This Recommendation aims, in general, to contribute to the **modernisation of education and training systems and to the improvement of employability, mobility and social integration of workers and learners**. It also aims at better linking formal, non-formal and informal learning and supporting the validation of learning outcomes acquired in different settings.

Review the framework proposed in 2008: the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 laid down common principles governing quality assurance in higher education and vocational education and training. These principles respected the principle of subsidiarity. However, an implementation report of the 2013 EQF indicated that further development of the EQF should take place in order to enhance the transparency and comparability of qualifications. The new framework therefore aims to make the certifications clearer and easier to compare.

- **The issue of recognition of migrants' skills:** while the Union's *acquis* on legal immigration and asylum provides for equal treatment with EU nationals, higher levels of overqualification and underemployment persist among third-country nationals with higher education. Cooperation between the Union and third countries on the transparency of qualifications can therefore contribute to the integration of migrants into the Union's labour markets;
- **Subsidiarity and importance of the adopted terms of reference:** this recommendation (2017) **does not replace or define any national framework or system of certification**. It seeks to strengthen the EQF as a common frame of reference comprising **8 levels expressed as learning outcomes** and serving as a **translation mechanism between the different frameworks or certification systems and their levels**. In view of its non-binding nature, the Recommendation is in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in that it supports and complements the action of the Member States by facilitating cooperation between them in order to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of certifications awarded.

CONTENT: the Recommendation proposes a series of actions to be carried out at different levels which can be summarised as follows:

- as regards the **Member States**, it recommends:

- using the EQF to **reference national certification frameworks or systems** and comparing all types and levels of certification in the Union that are part of national qualifications frameworks or systems, in particular by referencing their qualification levels to levels of the EQF set out in **Annex II** and by using the criteria set out in **Annex III**;
- reviewing and updating, using the criteria set out in Annex III, the referencing of the levels of the national certification frameworks or systems to the levels of the EQF set out in Annex II;
- ensuring that qualifications with an EQF level are in accordance with the common principles for quality assurance set out in Annex IV;
- **promoting linkages between credit systems and national certification frameworks** or systems and linking them to national certification frameworks or systems. These common principles will not lead to an automatic recognition of qualifications;
- taking steps to ensure that all new certification documents issued by the competent authorities (certificates, diplomas, certificate or diploma supplements) and/or registers of qualifications contain a clear reference to the appropriate EQF level;
- improve transparency on the EQF criteria and encourage social partners, public employment services, education providers (...) to use the EQF to support the comparison of qualifications and the transparency of learning outcomes.

- as regards **the Commission in cooperation with the Member States and stakeholders within the EQF advisory group**, it recommends:

- supporting the consistent application of the EQF in all Member States;
- supporting the development, on a voluntary basis, of procedures for **the levelling of international qualifications**;
- exploring the possibilities of defining and applying criteria and procedures that allow for the **comparison**, in accordance with international agreements, of national and regional **qualifications frameworks of third countries with the EQF**.

- as regards **the Commission**, it recommends:

- ensuring that the implementation of the Recommendation is supported by actions financed under relevant Union programmes;
- ensuring effective implementation of the EQF by maintaining and fully supporting the EQF Advisory Group established in 2009;
- reviewing and evaluating the measures taken in the light of this recommendation and reporting to the Council, by 2022, on the experience gained and lessons to be learned for the future, including the review and revision of this recommendation.

Annexes: the Recommendation also contains a series of annexes containing the following elements:

- **Annex I:** definitions relevant to the qualifications framework;

- **Annex II:** Descriptors defining the required levels of the EQF with a specific level of knowledge, skills and competences acquired for each reference level described in terms of the learner's "responsibility and autonomy" criteria;
- **Annex III:** Criteria and procedures for matching national certification frameworks or systems with the EQF;
- **Annex IV:** Principles for quality assurance of qualifications in national qualifications frameworks or systems and mapped to the EQF;
- **Annex V:** Principles governing credit system systems linked to national qualifications frameworks or systems, mapped to the EQF;
- **Annex VI:** elements necessary for the electronic publication of information on the certifications corresponding to each level of the EQF.

Repeal: the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 is hereby repealed.