



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training



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## **Reflection on the Flemish Qualifications Structure from an international perspective**

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## **The Flemish qualifications structure/framework in the European context (I)**

- **The Flemish QF is the second example (after Malta) of the new generation comprehensive Qualifications Frameworks developed in response to the EQF**
- **The Flemish QF demonstrates that the EQF is becoming a reality**
- **The Flemish QF signals that the EQF approach - based on a voluntary approach and focussing on learning outcomes and transparency – is seen as relevant**

## **The Flemish qualifications structure/framework in the European context (II)**

The basic objectives of the Flemish QF are modest – to increase the transparency of the existing qualifications system

**However, the Flemish QF have the potential of becoming an instrument for reform and change – a transformative QF**

This reformative role could be released by

- A systematic use of learning outcomes and competences
  - influencing standards, curricula, assessment and teaching and learning approaches
- Using the QF as a reference point for validation of non-formal and in formal learning as well as for guidance

## The Flemish qualification structure/framework in the European context (III)

Of particular importance is the decision to

- Differentiate and interlink educational and occupational qualifications
- To allow for both categories of qualifications at all levels, from 1-8
- To introduce a horizontal level differentiation stressing knowledge, skills, **context**, autonomy and responsibility
- May influence the relationship HE and VET (parity of esteem, new VET) improving access and progression

## **The Flemish qualifications structure in the European context (IV)**

**The inclusion of labour market stakeholders (social and economic council, sector committees) in the QF structure (recognition of professional qualifications) sends an important signal**

- **The QF is not merely a new umbrella for the education and training system**
- **The QF is a way to strengthen the interaction between education and labour market**
- **The QF has the potential to include qualifications currently outside the formal system (awarded by sectors, professional bodies and enterprises – at national and international level)**



## **The Flemish qualifications structure/framework in Belgium**

- **Parallel to the UK situation where different QFs have been developed and are interact with each other (England-Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland)**
- **In the UK (and including Ireland) work has been going on for years to ensure the linkages between frameworks – for the purpose of the individual learner**
- **The UK will present one single referencing report to the EQF in February 2010 (although containing 3 sections) – in line with the EQF recommendation**

**This model can be followed by Belgium – the purpose must primarily be to increase the transparency of all Belgian qualifications – for individual learners, workers and employers**



## The Challenges ahead

Can **the learning outcomes approach** become the integrating principle at European and national level, for

- Frameworks
- Credit systems
- Validation of non-formal and informal learning
- Guidance and counselling services
- Quality assurance systems at all levels
- Existing Academic and Professional Recognition ‘regimes’ (NARIC/ENIC, Directive 2005/36)

**Have the individual user been lost in an increasingly complex approach – or can we create ‘one-stop-shops’...?**



## The Challenges ahead

- **The limitations of qualifications - and qualifications frameworks....**
- **Qualifications capture an important but limited part of learning outcomes.....**
- **The need to develop a common language between education/training and the labour market**
- **ESCO – European standard for skills and competences...?**

## **MUTUAL TRUST....**

**The real test is ahead of us, can we develop the necessary mutual trust to the qualifications frameworks**

- **In Flanders**
- **In Belgium**
- **In Europe**
- **In education as well as in the the labour market?**