

REPORT FROM HERE SEMINAR, WARSAW, POLAND, 19-20 SEPTEMBER 2016

The aim of the Higher Education Reform Experts seminar titled *Qualifications Frameworks: What are they, how do they work, what is their impact?*, held in Warsaw from 19-20 September, was, as always, a good opportunity for exchanging the state of play in the field of development and maintenance of NQF, current and forthcoming challenges among all seminar participants supported by EU countries, as well as the experiences on how to make NQF useful, informative and flexible. In this overall process, motivation for NQF development, mobility of students and academic staff, and internationalization of HE were the focus of our discussion and conclusions. We strongly supported bringing together all relevant stakeholders, primarily ministries, HEIs, labour market, as well as establishing closer communication tool related to learning outcomes, lifelong learning and the recognition of prior learning.

We fully agree that NQF is a good informant providing us with knowledge about flexibility of learning paths in the process of qualification acquisition, led by the principle that NQF has to be based on learning outcomes and not the ECTS number. Therefore, defining learning outcomes represents a key process in NQF creation, and the only true basis for comparison of frameworks or qualifications among different countries. It is very evident that there is a huge number of certificates issued and courses organized within the industry, which are taken by many during their professional life as a precondition for their advancement as this requires the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and competences needed for better work performance. At the same time, a very evident shortcoming in many countries is the absence of procedure for official recognition of such acquired knowledge. Given that knowledge upgrading represents a precondition for changing profession, the mentioned circumstances have to be altered. The procedure of recognising non-formal and informal education has a crucial role as it enables better transition to the labour market. Creating specific educational modules and putting them into force is very important for all of those who wish to acquire new knowledge from the specific area and to be specialised for a certain part of a concrete job. It cannot be neglected that the systematic approach is the basic element in the overall process of the enlivening RPL. In some countries this approach is based on passing some courses as part of obligatory training, but it is not regulated at the system level.

Concerning LLL, the overall goal has to be spreading information about LLL and making it transparent and achievable. We strongly agree that LLL is about individuals as one of the preconditions, but regulation at the system level is the essential basis for its advancement. Universities have to do more in the field of LLL if they want to survive in the specific social circumstances, which is characterized by a need for better educated persons in the future on one hand and demographic and economic issues on the other

hand. Such kind of need cannot be a part of the regular curriculum. Recognition of VET will be in focus specifically in the situation when we have high production of HE graduates which will lead to the distinctive goal of their better incorporation at the labour market.

We opened tough questions and set to ourselves a very challenging mission and tasks concerning the matter of building and maintaining QF. We have to ask ourselves about our awareness of the NQF purpose, quality of communication with relevant stakeholders and wider public. An important matter is the referencing process of our NQFs against EQF, information to employers about NQF, DS and its role in NQF building? The creation of legislation is not a problem, but its implementation is. What about changing of legislation, is it a time consuming process or not? We have to rethink it and work hard not only in terms of establishing NQF but also in terms of its quality using praxis of EU countries which gave us presentation regarding very strict connection between quality assurance and the quality of QF.

This Seminar was organized very well, structured using schemes of plenary session and work in broken groups which gave all of us the opportunity to be closer and conduct very open discuss in details. We enjoyed the hospitality of our host and their readiness to be at our disposal at every moment.

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