

ANNEX II

COUNTRY REPORTS

STATE OF PLAY

INCLUSION OF SPORT QUALIFICATIONS

in

formal education, formalized sport education and non formal
education systems in the field of sport

in

National Qualification Frameworks

Based on:

CEDEFOP annual review on developments of national qualification frameworks
(2013) (http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6117_en.pdf)

Inventories received from MS on the sport education in sport sector.

AUSTRIA

Implementation of NQF

Austria has designed a comprehensive national qualifications framework through a research-based approach and a broad range of stakeholders involved in the development. The framework will be implemented gradually, through a step-by-step approach. The overall process is structured into three corridors: corridor one aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State; corridor two focuses on the assignment of qualifications from the non-formal sector (e.g. occupation-specific and company based CVET); and corridor three aims to develop approaches to validating learning outcomes acquired through informal learning. Austria sees the NQF as a translation device to make qualifications transparent and comparable as well as a tool to improve validation of non-formal learning. It will not have regulatory functions. Implementing the NQF is closely related to strengthening the learning outcomes orientation in education and training, e.g. by revising VET curricula. NQF levels will also be explicitly mentioned in curricula and training profiles.

The Austrian NQF has eight levels. A key characteristic of the NQF development is that levels 6-8 are open to VET qualifications acquired outside the Bologna strand. Two sets of descriptors (for higher education and VET) coexist at these levels (18). Dublin descriptors are used for qualifications related to Bologna cycles (BA, MA, Doctorate) and awarded by higher education institutions (i.e. universities, universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*) and university colleges for teacher education (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*). VET qualifications and qualifications from adult learning ('non-Bologna' strand) will be allocated based on NQF descriptors and additional criteria.

The NQF plays an important part in implementing a strategy of lifelong learning that includes and assigns to all contexts of learning (formal, non-formal and informal) the same value. Some suggestions have been made on how to include non-formal qualifications in the NQF, for example by setting up 'bodies responsible for qualifications'. Methodologies and responsibilities are being developed for linking validation and allocation of non-formal qualifications to the NQF. This marks an important stepping stone towards an inclusive NQF.

Level descriptors are defined as knowledge, skills and competence. Reference qualifications are used to illustrate the level of learning outcomes. Through the implementation of the NQF, Austria is strengthening the learning outcome approach across education and training: this is seen as central to the positioning of qualifications onto the NQF. Many qualifications are already learning outcome oriented, but the approach has not been applied consistently across all sectors and institutions. Several initiatives are supposed to strengthen learning outcomes orientation. In higher education a qualification profile, describing the expected learning outcomes (and definitions of learning outcomes) for each module, was introduced by the University Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) in 2002, but implementation differs across higher education institutions.

Educational standards for VET schools and colleges define 'content' (subject and knowledge areas and topics with specified goals), 'action' (cognitive achievements required in the particular subjects), and personal and social competences related to the specific field.

Austria is preparing a competence-oriented and standardised '*Reifeprüfung*' to be administered in general and vocational upper secondary education. In apprenticeship (dual system), a training regulation is issued for each profile by the Federal Ministry of Economics. It consists of the occupational competence profile (*Berufsprofil*) with related activities and work descriptions, and job profile (*Berufsbild*) with knowledge and skills to be acquired by apprentices.

Austria referenced its national qualifications levels to the EQF and self-certified to QF-EHEA in June 2012, preparing one comprehensive report.

Sport sector

In Austria the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The 'Universitatssport – Institut' of the University of Vienna¹ and the 'Institut für Sportwissenschaft' of the University of Innsbruck² are examples of formal education institutes which are licensed to qualify students in general topics of competitive sports“ (Leistungssport). They offer degrees in Higher Secondary School Teacher Education for Physical education and Sport.

These institutes are part of the first NQF corridor, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, (para) medical practitioners, referees and/or other officials in the sport sector itself. Special courses and educational activities are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations not part of the formal education system for different parts of the sector as sport organisations and clubs, municipal and local multisport programmes and in the fitness and outdoor and alpine sports. People can qualify for trainer/coach, instructor, 'teacher', referee, official, (para) medical practitioner (e.g. sport masseur) and sport manager or board member.

The national government role towards the non-formal educational system in the sport sector is providing financial assistance and partly recognising non formal education to continue with formal education. As sport according to the Austrian constitution is the responsibility of the regional governments these Lander governments support non formal education for sport organizations. The national government bodies do not have to be informed about these non-formal educational activities in the sport sector. State recognised sport governing bodies provide non-formal education in subjects where formal education does not put in resources. (E.g. pre-education in sport to get the basic knowledge about being an instructor: "Übungsleiter".)

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some of the educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. It means that the qualification frameworks are based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education (knowledge, skills and competences). The frameworks are based on occupational and professional profiles and developed with branch organisations, employers and employees in the (sub)sector sport and based on expertise of educational providers. However it should be noted that the implementation of the learning outcome approach is still limited to the description of the qualification frameworks and did not change methods of assessments or curriculum so far.

¹ <http://www.univie.ac.at/USI-Wien/>

² <http://www.uibk.ac.at/fakultaeten/>

Inclusion in NQF

Most of the sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) are completely and directly integrated in the National Qualification Framework. Qualifications for instructors (fitness and outdoor sports) referees and officials are embedded in a separate sport qualification framework with a formalized link to NQF. However in some sports or parts of the sector the qualification framework have no link to NQF at all.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Austria national sport organisations or branch organisations which only follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation (e.g. diving, football, cricket, rugby, fitness) instead of the national standards does not exist. However some of the organisations are bound to international regulations or conventions in the fields of assessments and examination, content of assessments and examination and access to the courses. This could lead to international recognised qualifications respected in Austria, as long as the qualifications are obtained through a formal education institute.

Most of national sport organisations follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation, but are also included in the national sport qualification frameworks. Examples are the Austrian Football Organisation (which is member of the UEFA) and the National Ski federation. The UEFA prescribes certain competences that the highest qualification to coach a football team have to reach. These competences (and some other more) are implemented in the formal curriculums taught on federal academies. The international federation for skiing instructors lists all competences (Racing, curriculum time, safety training), that a fully certified ski instructor has to reach. The formal curriculums, taught on federal academies, implement the goal competences in their curriculums.

Future developments

The following future developments in the inclusion of sport qualifications in a national qualification framework either directly or through a sectoral sport qualification framework, are expected:

- setting up learning outcomes framework for all non formal education in sport
- further implementation of learning outcomes approach on different levels
- referencing to national NQF level and if possible to the international level
- promotion of cooperation between formal and non-formal education systems

The Austrian government expects that cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport could be realised in the future on various levels including mutual recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and curriculum.

However this could not be an easy task as the constitution defines sport as a matter of the regional governments. Therefore Austria manifests for example 8 different Ski school laws, that all differ from one another in specific ways. Furthermore it is difficult (seen from a federal point of view) to oblige federal provinces to align their curriculums according to learning outcomes approach as the federal government only has an indirect influence on federal subjects concerning sport.

BELGIUM

Belgium is developing and implementing more than one NQF. This reflects the federal structure of Belgium, giving the three communities a wide ranging autonomy in how to organise their education, training and qualifications systems. The communities have been following different pathways, reflecting the substantial institutional and political differences in education and training. The link between the frameworks has been addressed in July 2012 by the adoption of an amendment to the Belgian Federal Law on the general structure of the education system: EQF levels will be used as a common reference for the three communities in Belgium. The linkages will be further enhanced by the adoption of broadly similar basic principles for the frameworks of Flanders and the French-speaking community. The three Belgian regions will reference separately to the EQF.

Belgium (Flemish community)

The act on the qualification structure (30 April 2009) underlines that the qualification structure (including the qualifications framework), should act as a reference for quality assurance, for developing and renewing courses, for developing and aligning procedures for recognising acquired competences, and for comparison (nationally and at European levels) of qualifications. The overall objective is to strengthen the transparency of qualifications and to clarify mutual relations – vertically and horizontally – between them. It is also to enhance communication on qualifications between education and the labour market and to strengthen permeability between the different learning systems

The quality assurance of pathways leading to recognised qualifications is being followed up through the establishment of the Flemish Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training (AKOV). This agency now covers all types and levels of qualification, except higher education qualifications at level 5 to level 8, and is crucial to the overall credibility and success of the overarching framework, domestically as well as at European level (in relation to the EQF). For qualifications at levels 5 to 8 a joint accreditation organisation has been set up together with the Netherlands (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie, NVAO).

The Flemish qualifications framework is based on an eight-level structure described by the categories of knowledge, skills, context, autonomy and responsibility. Compared to the EQF, the FQF-descriptors are more detailed, in particular for lower levels. A main difference is that the FQF does not use ‘competence’ as a separate descriptor category but considers it as an overarching term and uses it interchangeably with learning outcomes. A main feature of the Flemish framework is the use of ‘context’ as an explicit element of the descriptors. The context in which an individual is able to function is seen as an important part of any qualification.

The descriptors are used to describe two main categories of qualifications: professional and educational. A professional qualification is based on a set of competences allowing an individual to exercise a profession, and can be achieved both inside and outside education. An educational qualification is based on a set of competences an individual needs to participate in society, to start further education and/or to exercise professional activities. An educational qualification can only be acquired through education and in institutions recognised by the Flemish authorities. The distinction between professional and educational qualifications is applied for all eight levels of the framework; this offers the potential for high level qualifications in parallel to traditional academic institutions including vocationally oriented qualifications at level 6-8.

Progress on practical implementation of the principles of learning outcomes varies, in particular when looking at teaching methodologies and assessment practices. A 'competence'-based approach is well integrated, referring to professional requirements in the labour market. Learning outcomes are also present in other types of education, In general a clear shift to learning outcomes can be observed in Flanders. The insistence on a learning outcomes approach in the Bologna process has partly influenced university practices.

Validating non-formal and informal learning is identified as one of the objectives of the NQF, closely linked to the learning outcomes/competence perspective underpinning the framework. The process of recognising non-formal and informal learning has been in place in universities and colleges since 2005; it aims to recognise prior learning acquired in external institutions as well as through professional activities. A proof of competences is provided, granting access to further studies or contributing to the award of a degree. A system of 'certificates of work experience' has been introduced and is coordinated by the Ministry of Work, using professional competence standards (approved by the social partners in the Social and Economic Committee) as reference. This allows people without any diploma to demonstrate their professional skills and competences with a certificate, granted by the Flemish government, as formal proof of professional competence. In the period 2004-10, 2039 certificates were granted. A legislative framework for recognition of prior learning is expected in June 2013.

Flanders is working on the introduction of a quality assurance arrangement covering all pathways (*trajecten*) leading to a professional qualification. It will also cover validation of prior learning (or *Erkennen van Verworven Competenties*/recognition of prior learning). To accomplish this task, the proposal pays particular attention to the articulation of competence objectives ('...to be expressed in a clear and recognisable way...') and the assessment of these ('...clear and transparent assessment criteria known to the candidate; assessment oriented towards competences; the use of varied assessment methods aiming at validity and reliability...'). It is expected that the pilot will be formalised in a legislative framework in June 2013.

Referencing to the EQF was completed in June 2011. The lack of clarity on professional qualifications made it difficult for other countries to judge how Flemish qualifications compared to their own. Flanders will present an updated referencing report in 2013 which will focus on recent developments in FQF implementation, with particular emphasis on the alignment method and the updated legislative framework in place.

Sportsector

In the Flemish community of Belgium the main provider of educational programs for functions and tasks in sport organisations and clubs (eg. coaches), municipal and local multisport programmes, fitness and instructors for outdoor sports is the Flemish School for Sport Coaches (Vlaamse Trainersschool). The Flemish School for Sport Coaches is a collaboration, founded in 1994 by law, between the Flemish sports administration (Blosso), the Flemish sport federations and the formal education institutes in Higher Education in Flanders that provide education programs in the field of Physical Education.

The general formal education institutes in Higher Education and the sport federations also offer education and training for the sport sector outside this collaborative structure. The formal education institutes provide education for sport science, sport management and research. Sport federations often offer programs for referees and jury members.

It is estimated that in between 50-100 education providers are active in particular sport federations which are recognised by the state delegated sport governing body Bloso and by the Flemish School for Sport Coaches. Around 7500 people are annually qualified through this educational system.

Through its state delegated sport governing body Bloso and its role in the Flemish School for Sport Coaches, the regional government of Flanders regulates the access of the education and training, the curriculum, the level of teachers, assessment, audit and monitoring, further education, funding and the licensing.

The government provides financial support to educational providers based on direct costs of the education and the number of assessed participants and type of participants.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach and inclusion in NQF

The major part of the educational programs (in particular for coaching and sport instruction) offered by the Flemish School for Sport Coaches, is based on a learning outcomes approach. Occupational and professional profiles have been developed with sport federations, Higher Education institutes with Physical Education programs and branch organisations, employers and employees in the sport sector. These profiles have been offered for validation by the end of 2013 to the Flemish Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training (AKOV). Once validated and registered, the Coach education qualifications will be embedded in the Flemish qualification framework.

Profiles for the other parts of the educational programs of the Flemish School for Sport Coaches, such as life savers, high level (technical) teachers and senior citizen sport assistant are under development. Once completed, these profiles will also be offered for validation and registration so they can be embedded in the FQF.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In the Flemish community of Belgium no sport only follows the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation. However, some sports also have to follow the international standards for qualification, but they will be also included in the FQF (double referencing).

Future developments

Foreseen future activities are the continuous development of profiles for occupations and professions in the sport sector, along with the ongoing process of developing new and adjusting existing educational programs the prescribed profiles.

Belgium (French-speaking community)

The French community agreed in 2010 on the principle of creating a qualifications framework to increase overall transparency in the existing education and training system. The framework is not, at least at this stage, seen as an instrument for reform of existing institutions and structures. It is not perceived as having any regulatory role and will not directly influence decisions regarding recognition of individual certificates or diplomas. Only those qualifications which are delivered by public providers are included. The framework can, however, support the development of other tools and instruments for transparency, notably validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The framework is seen as an important instrument for strengthening the use of learning outcomes and for referencing to the EQF. The framework will have a double entry, one for educational qualifications and one for the professional qualifications. The final elements of the framework were expected to be finalised by March 2013, and specific law on the NQF will be prepared.

The work on a qualifications framework for higher education, linked to the Bologna process, has been going on in parallel and is expected to lead to self-certification to the EHEA by 2012-13.

The *service francophone des métiers et qualifications* (SFMQ) will play a key role in defining and positioning professional qualifications at levels 1-4. The SFMQ is well placed to play this role as its overall task (set up in 2009) is to develop occupational profiles based on the inputs of the social partners and in collaboration with employment services. Its role is also to develop training profiles with reference to these occupational profiles, in close liaison with education and training providers. ARES, the Academy of Research and Higher education will be responsible for defining and positioning educational qualifications at levels 6-8. ARES and SFMQ will share responsibility for qualifications at level 5, reflecting the extensive 'mix' of professional and educational qualifications at this level. The procedures for the inclusion of higher level professional qualifications are still being discussed. Using one set of level descriptors for all levels and both types of qualifications (see below) has gradually won acceptance by the different stakeholders.

An eight-level structure is foreseen, using two blocks of level descriptors: knowledge/skills and context/ autonomy/responsibility, similar to the Flemish community structure.

Learning outcomes are integral to a range of recent and continuing reforms. In vocational education and training, work is continuing to define and describe qualifications in term of learning outcomes. Regional CVET providers are developing a common procedure (ReCAF, *Reconnaissance des acquis de formation*) of certification based on common standards and common standards for assessment, linked to the *Consortium de validation des compétences*. The descriptions of qualifications are based on the job profiles (professional standards) defined by the social partners. Common training profiles are then defined by education and training providers. These profiles are declined in units of learning outcomes compatible with the ECVET specifications. The insistence on a learning outcomes approach in the Bologna process has also influenced university practices. The autonomy of universities means that the decision to apply learning outcomes has to be made by the institution itself, resulting in varying approaches. For the *Hautes Écoles* (higher education institutions outside universities, delivering bachelors and masters) the definition of common competences profiles is in process.

Much effort has been invested in developing a system for validating non-formal and informal learning. In the vocational training area the 'validation' process leads to the award of a *titre de compétences*, a legal recognised document by the regions and the French community commission (COCOF). The reference used for validating skills is not the existing diploma or certificates, but competence standards for specific occupations. Competences has been defined in terms of the set of

measurable skills necessary to undertake certain tasks in a workplace situation (41), i.e. geared towards measuring skills of direct relevance to specific job profiles. The system previously consisted of job profiles developed by the French register of occupations in the labour market (ROME) and by the *Commission Communautaire des Professions et des Qualifications* (42) (CCPQ). The CCPQ has developed a set of qualification and training profiles, in consultation with sector representatives and the unions. These profiles specify the competences required for each occupational profile, together with associated indicators. In the future, standards developed by the SFMQ (see before) will be used. Due to their recent introduction, these titles are still relatively new to employers: their future value will depend on the extent to which they are integrated into the NQF and how they are linked to (the better-known) certificates and diploma.

Since 1991, adult education has been organised in units and the possibility of validating non-formal and informal learning is included in the law. It is possible to access training without the required title, to be exempted for a unit or a part of unit, or to obtain a certificate or diploma with only the final test, called *épreuve intégrée*. Higher education institutions (both *Hautes Écoles* and universities) are developing procedures for recognising prior learning or experience for access to training, without the required title or benefit from dispenses of some ECTS (*Valorisation des acquis*).

Referencing to the EQF is seen as an integral part of the overall work on the NQF. As the development of the framework itself has been, referencing to the EQF will probably not take place until late 2013.

Sport sector

In the French speaking community of Belgium the general formal education institutes in Higher Education offer education and training for the the sportsector, for coaching, sport science, sport management and research.

The Universities of Brussels ULB, Louvain la Neuve and Liege are for example licensed to provide qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching, sport instructor and not only train teachers of physical education and sport, but are also specialised in training for management and research in sport.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

Alongside the formal education system there is a by the department of sport formalized sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors. Special courses and educational activities are offered by the sport governing body ADEPS and sport federations for functions and tasks in sport organisations and clubs, municipal and local multisport programmes, and fitness. The education of instructors for outdoor sport is in the hands of the outdoor sport providers. It is estimated that in between 50-100 education providers are active in particular sport federations which are recognised by the state delegated sport governing body ADEPS. Around 1400 people are annually qualified through this educational system.

The regional government regulates the access of the education and training, the curriculum, the level of teachers, assessment, audit and monitoring, further education, funding and the licensing. The government provides financial support to educational providers based on direct costs of the education and the number of assessed participants and type of participants. Grants are under the condition that the qualification is part of the qualification framework and that there is a learning outcomes approach and that there is formation plan and cahier de charge. In the French speaking

communities of Belgium there are limited provisions for quality assurance through the sport governing body ADEPS.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some of the educational activities offered in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach. Coach education qualifications will be part of a future qualification framework based on learning outcomes, using the same level descriptors as formal education. The sport framework will be based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organisations, employers and employees in the sport sector the expertise of educational providers. The implementation of the learning outcome approach will not be limited to the description of the qualification frameworks but also include methods of assessments, the curriculum, validation mechanism and room for individual pathways.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) will be embedded in a sport qualification framework with a formalized link to the National Qualification Framework for formal education.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In the French speaking communities of Belgium no sport only follows the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation. However, some sports follow the international standards for qualification, but they will be also included in the national sport qualification framework (double referencing).

Future developments

Foreseen future activities are the setting up of the sport qualification framework, referencing nationally and to the international level, validation and recognition mechanism and the promotion of a formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and curriculum. Challenge will be the inclusion of the sport qualification framework directly in the NQF.

Belgium (German-speaking community)

The German-speaking community of Belgium is currently developing its qualifications framework. The main objective is to strengthen international comparability. While subject to Federal laws on education applying in Belgium, the geographic location of the region means that citizens are likely to cross the border for living and working. This makes it a priority to clarify the relationship between own qualifications and those awarded in the neighbouring countries. The framework will also promote equivalence between general and vocational education and training and the shift to learning outcomes is an important step in increasing transparency and strengthening permeability.

An eight-level, learning outcomes based framework will be introduced. The framework builds on the concept of *Handlungskompetenz* (action competence) and distinguishes between subject/occupational specific (knowledge and skills) and personal competences (social competences and autonomy). The framework is seen as an instrument for promoting a learning outcomes or competence based approach across the different parts of education and training in the region.

The NQF for the German-speaking community was/will be adopted – through a parliamentary decree – in 2013. It is foreseen that reference to NQF levels will be introduced into qualifications and certificates in 2013 and that a system for validating non-formal and informal learning will be introduced by 2014. It is not clear when a referencing to the EQF could take place.

BULGARIA

Implementation of NQF

The Bulgarian national qualifications framework for lifelong learning was adopted by the Council of Ministers decision No 96 of 2 February 2012. The Bulgarian national qualifications framework is one single, comprehensive framework, which includes qualifications from all levels and subsystems of education and training (pre-primary, primary and secondary general education, VET and HE). The overall objective of developing and introducing a comprehensive NQF compatible with the EQF and the QF-EHEA is to make the levels of the Bulgarian education system transparent and easier to understand by describing them in terms of learning outcomes. It is hoped that this will raise trust in education and training and make mobility and recognition of qualifications easier.

Apart from offering transparency, the NQF is seen as an important tool supporting national reforms and needs, for example by setting up a system for validating non-formal learning, improving education quality, modernising curricula and strengthening provider accountability. The NQF aims to play an important role in supporting lifelong learning and in promoting the participation of adults in learning in Bulgaria.

The NQF comprises eight levels and an additional preparatory level (NQF level 'zero'), covering pre-school education. Level descriptors take into account EQF and QF-EHEA descriptors. All levels are described in terms of knowledge (theoretical and factual), skills described as cognitive (use of logical and creative thinking) and practical (manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments), and competences. The descriptor distinguishes between personal and professional competences. They include autonomy and responsibility, but key competences such as learning competences, communicative and social competences are also emphasised.

It is expected that the qualifications levels will strengthen the outcomes-dimension and give the learning outcomes a more prominent role in planning education provision. This is especially linked to the development of VET standards divided into units of learning outcomes. In 2011 a draft model of a new VET standard (the so-called State educational requirement for the acquisition of vocational qualification for profession) was elaborated in line with the principles and characteristics of EQF and ECVET.

Discussions on recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning have been intensified by the NQF development.

Bulgaria aims to reference its NQF to the EQF and the QF-EHEA in 2013. One joint report is being prepared.

The framework can play an important role, but only if it is a part of wider strategic policy resulting in necessary reforms and institutional regulations. The forthcoming Law on Pre-school and School Education, the Higher Education Act and amendments to the VET Act will feed into these developments.

Sport sector

In Bulgaria the formal education institutes in Higher Education offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

In the field of sport for example the National Sports Academy “Vassil Levski” Sofia³ is accredited by the state authority to provide qualifications for sport specialists at various levels.

The National Sports Academy (NSA) is the only specialized higher educational establishment in Bulgaria in the field of physical education and sport since 15 of November 1942.

Currently the NSA is granted with full state accreditation, offering university degree programs at three educational levels – Bachelor (BSc), Master (MSc) and Doctoral (PhD) and three professional fields – Sport, Physical education and Public health. The NSA is structured in three faculties Faculty of Sports Coaching: Faculty of Physical Education and Faculty of Kinesiotherapy, Tourism and Sport Animation.

At bachelor level the NSA is conducting education of:

Faculty of Sports Coaching

Education and training for coaches in 55 different sport disciplines; sports managers; sport commentators; coaches in martial arts and condition training in the army and the police.

Faculty of Physical Education

Educating and training of teachers in physical education

Faculty of Kinesiotherapy, Tourism and Sport Animation

kinesiotherapists/physiotherapists; sports animators; Coaches in Adapted physical activity and sport.

On master level the NSA is offering education in thirteen main master programs with possibilities for specialization in different fields.

The NSA is organizing the education of doctoral students in the accredited scientific field “Theory and methodology of physical education and sports training, including methodology of remedial gymnastics in the three professional fields - Sport, Physical education and Public health. The Centre of Post-Graduate Studies at the NSA offers different post-graduate continuing education programs in specialized and interdisciplinary fields. The NSA is well known by its research activities in all directories of sport science which are conducted on field or at the modern Center for Scientific and Applied Research in Sport. It is equipped with advanced diagnostic and research apparatus including mobile as well as stationary devices.

A well-developed VET system for education covering levels 3 and 4 EQF exist for the fitness sector. The VET education in the sport sector is provided by secondary sport schools and sport colleges (level 4). Formal education institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

Alongside with the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational education and training system for coaches, trainers, instructors, referees and/or other officials in the sport sector provided by private professional education centres. The coaches education in the framework of the International federations is organised by the sport federations, sport specific schools and provided mainly by specialists from the National Sports Academy and foreign lecturers. It is estimated that in between 50-100 providers are active ,in particular all federations and specific academies, and they are accredited by a state delegated sport governing body and sport or branch organisations.

These institutes are participating in the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport has a role towards the non-formal educational system in sport. It regulates and funds the non-formal education system as for access, content, level of teachers,

³ <http://www.nsa.bg/>

assessment, licence; organize campaigns and quality audits and support updating and modernisation of the education system. Educational providers and institutes are responsible for Quality Assurance provisions for the non-formal education system: content, duration, intensity, form, selection of educators.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some of the educational activities offered for coach education by sport organisations and other providers in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach. Sport qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes and using the same level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles based on expertise within educational providers. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the sport qualification frameworks but also include curriculum.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications will be completely and directly integrated in the National Qualification Framework for formal education for coaches, trainers, instructors, referees, officials and sport managers.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Bulgaria all sport federations follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation, they lead to an internationally recognised qualification and they are recognised by the government and sport governing bodies.

Future developments

Bulgaria foresees referencing nationally and if possible to the international level, new legislation or regulations and the promotion of cooperation between formal and non formal education systems. A formal relation between the two (formal and non formal) education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and the curriculum. The National Sports Academy as the only specialised higher education provider for coaches, is facing the challenge to achieve recognition by every international federation of the respected sport in which provides education. Bulgaria believes in the helpfulness of European exchange of information on the progress of this process through projects, experts meetings organised on regular base with requirement for dissemination of the information on large base.

CROATIA

Croatia has developed a comprehensive, learning outcomes based NQF, the Croatian qualifications framework (CROQF). It will link and coordinate different education and training subsystems; it will also be the basis for validating non-formal and informal learning and incorporate credit systems.

The act on the CROQF, which was subject to public consultation in autumn 2012, was adopted by the Parliament.

Apart from offering transparency, the CROQF is seen as an important tool for reforming national education and training. It builds on the reforms under way since 2005, e.g. developing new educational standards and national curricula for general education, as well as introducing the State matura. In 2006, and as part of this process, councils were established. These councils were entrusted with defining the necessary vocational qualifications, analysing existing and necessary competences within sectors and subsectors, and developing the contents for parts of the vocational qualification standard, providing the basis for new VET curricula.

Besides helping the link to the EQF (and to the QF-EHEA), thus allowing for international comparability of Croatian qualifications, the framework is seen as reflecting national needs and priorities and as an instrument making it possible to develop new education and training solutions specific to the Croatian context:

- better link education and training with labour market needs;
- improve social inclusion and equity;
- improve pathways between subsystems and between sectors;
- make qualifications transparent and more consistent;
- support lifelong learning and offer a good basis for validating non-formal and informal learning.

Specific CROQF aims include setting up a system for validating and recognising non-formal and informal learning, and creating a well-founded quality assurance system

The shift to learning outcomes is seen as an essential part of the CROQF development and is supported by all stakeholders. The CROQF is a qualifications and credit framework. It has eight reference levels, in line with the EQF, but with two additional sublevels at levels 4 and 8 to cater for existing qualifications. Each qualification in the CROQF will be defined in terms of profile (field of work or study), reference level (refers to complexity of acquired competences) and the volume (measured as credit points). Level descriptors are defined in terms of knowledge (theoretical and factual) and skills (cognitive and practical and social skills are included). A third column is defined as responsibility and autonomy. It is emphasised that key competences should be included in each qualification.

The CROQF introduces two classes of qualifications: full and partial depending on minimum ECVET and/or HROO points. The VET reform agenda includes a move towards an outcomes-based approach in standards and curricula; pilot occupational standards and outcomes-based curricula are being developed. A new approach to evaluating school outputs introduces a system of common final exams (State matura) for grammar schools and other four-year secondary schools in Croatian language, mathematics, the first foreign language, and the mother tongue for ethnic minority pupils.

Higher education has undergone extensive change during the last decade, including the use of learning outcomes. The decision (in 2001) to take part in the Bologna process has made it necessary for Croatia to adjust significantly its higher education system. The introduction of undergraduate (first cycle) and integrated (second cycle) programmes started in 2005. The change of curricula seeks development of competences needed on the labour market, but the functional link between higher

education institutions and the labour market, and the social community in particular, has not yet been well established.

The system for validating non-formal and informal learning is a new concept and validation of learning outcomes acquired outside formal education and training is still rare. The CROQF is supported by a new register bringing together subregisters of occupational standards, qualifications standards, units of learning outcomes and including both programmes and awarding bodies.

Croatia referenced its national qualifications levels to the EQF and self-certified to QF-EHEA in March 2012, preparing one comprehensive report.

Sportsector

In Croatia the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector for coaching, recreation and sport management.

In Higher Education the Universities of Zagreb and Split offers degrees in coaching and sport instruction. More institutes for Higher Education offer specialized programs in sport management, sport related to tourism and recreation and health promotion.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for coaches, instructors, referees and other officials. Special courses and educational activities are offered by sport federations and specific training academies for sport coaches for people would like to function in sport organisations and clubs. It is estimated that around 10 providers are active in particular the Croatian Olympic Academy and some National Sports Federations. The educational providers are recognised by the government, the state delegated sport governing body and sport or branch organisations. The national government role is focused on legislation and funding of the educational providers. The Croatian Olympic Committee, established as NGO with public authority status in certain issues, established the Croatian Olympic Academy specifically to enable sportmen and women at the end of their active competitive career to obtain adequate education to become coaches. Currently there are no provisions for Quality Assurance.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

All sport qualifications for coaches and some of referees and officials are based on a learning outcomes approach, however the qualifications are not part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptor.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Croatia football and skiing follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation which lead to an internationally recognised qualification. The international qualification is recognised by the sport governing bodies in Croatia. No detailed data exist if this applies for more sports.

Future developments

Croatia foresees new legislation or regulations in the perspective of coach education in the future. Moreover it expects that a formal cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport will lead to recognition of qualifications. However, this could be a challenge as in sports in Croatia state regulation in the field of sport is limited.

CYPRUS

Implementation of NQF

Based on the decision to create an NQF by the Council of Ministers in 2008 (Decision No 67.445) Cyprus has developed a proposal for a comprehensive NQF which includes all levels and types of qualifications from all subsystems of education and training, from primary to higher education qualifications. The system of vocational qualifications will be an integral, but distinct part of the proposed NQF.

The main role of the NQF is to classify qualifications according to predefined levels of learning outcomes. It should improve transparency, quality and relevance of qualifications, strengthen the link with the labour market and be open to qualifications awarded outside formal education.

Inclusion of the vocational qualifications system in the NQF will bring comparability and better correlation of various qualifications, acquired in formal or non-formal learning, which will result in the upgrading of knowledge, skills and competences throughout lifelong learning. One important policy objective is also to reinforce vocational education and training at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels. The reform potential of the NQF is being acknowledged by linking it to wider reforms and procedures for quality assurance, assessment and awarding of qualifications.

The stakeholders responsible for accrediting qualifications will continue to work according to the existing legislative framework for their operation. However, new legislation on the operation of the NQF, which would clarify the cooperation among different stakeholders, was thought necessary. A new permanent body, the Council of the national qualifications framework of Cyprus, has been established.

An eight-level reference structure is proposed, reflecting the main characteristics of the national qualification system. The level descriptors are described in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. Knowledge is defined by the type and complexity of knowledge involved and the ability to place one's knowledge in a context. Skills are expressed by type of skills involved; the complexity of problem-solving; and communication skills. Competence contains the following aspects: space of action, cooperation and responsibility, and learning skills. These were simultaneously formulated for all levels so that there would be clear progression from one level to the next. The VET qualifications will most probably be aligned from level 2 to 6 of the NQF. This is still being discussed.

Emphasis is increasingly being put on the learning outcomes and the need to revise curricula, learning programmes and assessment methodologies towards learning outcomes. A number of reforms are under way, exemplified by upgrading of curricula for pre-primary and upper secondary education, upgrading of vocational education and training through the introduction of post-secondary institutes for vocational education and training (launched in September 2012) and the introduction of new modern apprenticeship.

Discussions on recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning are an integral part of NQF development, with numerous public and private stakeholders participating. Competence-based vocational qualifications, which will constitute an integral part of the NQF, are already open for validation of non-formal learning. Through this the NQF aims to bridge the various qualifications acquired via formal, non-formal and informal learning and strengthen the links between initial and continuous vocational education and training.

The referencing to the EQF report is expected to be presented in 2013.

Sport Sector

In Cyprus the formal education institutes in Higher Education offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

In the field of sport for example the Near East University in Nicosia is licensed to provide qualifications for trainers at bachelor level. It offers degrees in Higher Secondary School Teacher Education for Physical education. The School of Physical Education and Sports not only trains teachers of physical education and sport but is also specialised in training for research and management in sport.

Formal education institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees and/or other officials in the sport sector. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors, sport managers are offered. by all kind of institutes or organisations, such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, branch organisations and private educational institutes for different parts of the sector as sport organisations and clubs and fitness and outdoor sports. Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by federations and branch organisations while sport para medical courses are often organised through private educational institutes. It is estimated that in between 10 - 50 providers are active, including the majority of federations and specific academies.

Around 80 people are annually qualified through this system.

The national government role towards the non-formal educational system in the sport sector is providing financial assistance to clubs and to the promotion of e.g. education of coaches through campaigns. There is no legislation and the sport umbrella organisation plays an important role by regulating access to the courses, content of curriculum, level of teachers, assessment and examination, issuing licences and organising further education. This organisation support educational providers for their direct costs. There are no provisions for quality assurance.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some of the educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. However, coach education qualifications are no part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications are not integrated in any Qualification Framework.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Cyprus football, basketball, volleyball and handball follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation which lead to an internationally recognised qualification. The international qualification is recognised by the sport governing bodies in Cyprus. The international qualifications regulate (part of) curriculum, assessments and access.

Future developments

The Cyprus government expects that cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport could be promoted and a formal relation between the two

education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and the curriculum. Therefore it is necessary to set up a qualification framework, further implement the learning outcomes approach, change legislation and grant conditions and making reference on national and international level. This should lead to a situation where also sport specific qualifications attained through formal education should be recognized by international federations.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Implementation of NQF

In the Czech Republic partial frameworks for vocational qualifications and for tertiary education qualifications have been developed and are now operational. Work on the framework for vocational qualifications started in 2005, based on the Act on the Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results (2006). The core of the framework is the publicly accessible national register of qualifications (NSK). The interlinked development of a framework and a register for vocational qualifications has been a cornerstone in the national strategy for lifelong learning. The strategy is aiming to make the whole system more transparent and understandable for all stakeholders, e.g. learners and employers, employees, training providers, to link initial and continuing education and to create a system to recognise and validate learning outcomes, irrespective of the way they were achieved. Moreover, it will open up different pathways to qualifications and increase flexibility in the qualifications system for example by vocational (formerly called partial) qualifications listed in the register and build a complete qualification step-by-step. Final exams based on qualification standards will function as a bridge between the two systems. The framework for vocational qualifications is fully operational. More than 60 000 applicants have been awarded qualification certificates (their competences validated).

The framework and register for vocational qualifications consists of eight levels. Level descriptors reflect the complexity of work activities.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) approves, modifies and issues the list of vocational and complete vocational qualifications. It supports the activities of the National Qualifications Council. This in turn – including all stakeholders – acts as an advisory body to the Ministry in the area of qualifications. Sector councils are in charge of developing qualification and assessment standards of the NSK up to level 7. At higher levels they define only specialised supplemental qualifications, not those awarded by higher education institutions (bachelor, master and PhD degrees).

A framework for tertiary qualifications has been designed under the Q-RAM project, initiated in 2009. Generic descriptors for each level of qualifications are used, compatible with the overarching framework for EHEA and also with the EQF descriptors. These descriptors cover four levels, corresponding to levels 5 to 8 in the EQF, and cover short cycle (no qualifications at this level currently in the system), bachelor, master and doctoral degrees.

The learning outcomes approach is widely used in the Czech education system, although applied and interpreted slightly differently across levels and subsystems. A competence-based and learning outcomes oriented approach is shared by VET and higher education and has broad political support.

The NQF and register of vocational qualifications and the system being developed for validating non-formal and informal learning are closely related. Validation and recognition procedures are carried out according to the qualifications and assessment standards included in the national register of qualifications. Currently, only qualifications included in the NSK register can be acquired though validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The Czech Republic referenced its formal qualifications to EQF levels in December 2011. Higher education qualifications are linked to the EQF, but not yet self-certified against the QF-EHEA. The question now being discussed is whether an overarching framework can help to coordinate and bridge the separate developments.

Sportsector

In the Czech Republic the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and other formal (Vocational) Education and Training institutes offer education and training in the sportsector mainly for coaching and sport management and at university level for research.

In the field of sport the Charles University in Prague, the Masaryk University in Brno and the Palacky University in Olomouc are examples of formal institutes which are licensed to provide qualifications for trainers at various levels. They offer degrees in Higher Secondary School Teacher Education for Physical education and Sport as a two-subject programme organised in cooperation with other faculties. The Faculties of Physical Education and Sport not only train teachers of physical education and sport but is also specialised in training for research and management in sport.

These institutes are part of the EHEA process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State. It is not clear whether formal vocational education qualifications on the lower levels are also offered by this Higher Education institutes.

Alongside the formal education system there is a formalized sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees and/or other officials in the sport sector. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors and sport managers are offered by institutes or organisations, such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, branch organisations and public authorities serving mainly sport organisations and clubs. It is estimated that in between 10 - 50 sport federations are active in this field. The sport federations are recognised/accredited by the government and in exceptional cases by the sport or branch organisations themselves, or they are not recognised at all. Around 1000 people are annually qualified through this system.

The national government has an important role in the accreditation of the providers and through the directive which regulates access to the courses, content of curriculum, level of teachers, issuing licences and further education. The government support the educational providers partly for their activities in this field based on number of participants and the direct costs. Moreover, grants for sport organisations and clubs are partly based specific conditions regarding qualifications of trainers and officials. However the NOC and sport confederation have their own role to play for courses and other educational activities on a basic level in particular for volunteers. These courses are regulated and supported by the NOC and sport confederation themselves regarding access to the courses, content of curriculum, level of teachers, assessments, issuing licences and sometimes further education. Funding is based on number of participants and direct costs of education. There are quality audits organised and the programmes are monitored. There are no further provisions for quality assurance.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Only a few of the educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. However, the basic coach education qualifications are no part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications obtained through the non formal system are not integrated in any Qualification Framework.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In the Czech Republic football and other not specified sports follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation which lead to an internationally recognised qualification. The international qualifications are recognised by the national sport governing bodies. The international qualifications regulate (part of) curriculum, assessments and access.

Future developments

In the Czech Republic the setting up of a learning outcomes based qualification framework, the implementation of a learning outcomes and the referencing to national and international level is needed. Moreover, it could be expected that new regulations should be developed and cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport promoted. The formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared curriculum and assessments.

DENMARK

Implementation of NQF

Denmark has developed a comprehensive NQF covering all types and levels of qualification awarded and quality assured by public authorities. Implementation of the eight-level framework started in June 2009 when the proposal for the framework was adopted.

The Danish NQF provides a comprehensive, systematic overview of public qualifications that can be acquired within the Danish system. The framework supports the development of a transparent education, training and learning system without dead ends; it supports the progression of learners, irrespective of their prior learning, age or employment situation.

The Danish NQF draws a clear distinction between levels 1 to 5 and levels 6 to 8. The latter are identical with the level descriptors in the Danish QF for higher education at bachelor, master and doctoral-level, and contain explicit references to research related outcomes. Qualifications at the levels 6-8 have to be fully accredited as meeting the legal requirements set by national authorities and according to the QF for higher education for qualifications at these levels.

The eight-level structure adopted for the Danish NQF is defined by knowledge (*Viden*), skills (*Færdigheder*) and competences (⁶⁸) (*Kompetenser*). Danish level descriptors have been based on a number of different sources, including existing descriptions of learning outcomes in curricula and programmes, the EQF descriptors, and the Bologna descriptors. They have been designed to be relevant to different types of qualification, theoretically as well as practically oriented.

The descriptors are used to address both (full) and supplementary qualifications. The role of supplementary qualifications is particularly important for adult education and for continuing vocational education and training. A supplementary qualification can be a supplement (addition) to a qualification, a part (module) or an independent entity not related to any other qualification.

The learning outcomes approach is widely accepted in all segments of education and training and is increasingly being used to define and describe curricula and programmes. VET has a strong tradition in defining qualifications in terms of competence, but higher education and the different parts of general education are also making progress. It is being admitted, however, that it will be necessary to deepen the understanding of the learning outcomes approach at all levels, for example by developing guidelines.

The NQF adopted in 2009 is considered to be a first step in a long-term development process. A second stage, opening the framework up to qualifications and certificates in the private and non-formal sector, is envisaged. The work on this second stage will have to focus on the procedures for inclusion and, in particular, on how quality assurance and accreditation can be handled. Denmark is now moving towards a fully operational national qualifications framework for lifelong learning.

Referencing to the EQF was completed in May 2011. The result shows a strong convergence between the Danish framework and the EQF but a linking of Danish level 1 to EQF level 2.

Sport sector

In Denmark the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sportsector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The University of Copenhagen⁴ and the University of Southern Denmark⁵ in Odense are for example licensed to provide qualifications for trainers at different levels. They offer degrees in Higher Secondary School Teacher Education for Physical education and Sport. The Institutes of Sport Sciences not only trains teachers of physical education and sport but is also specialised in training for research and management in sport.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral sport education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees and/or other officials in the sport sector. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, specific training academies, branch organisations, private educational institutes and professional sport clubs which are not part of the formal education system for different parts of the sector as sport organisations and clubs and fitness and outdoor sports. Courses for referees, officials, sport administrators and managers are mainly offered by federations. It is estimated that in between 50-100 providers are active in particular all federations and specific academies and they are not recognised and/or accredited.

There is no role of the sport department of the Danish government towards the non-formal educational system in the sport. This role is taken by the Danish sport confederation which regulates and funds the non-formal education system as for access, content, level of teachers, assessment, licence, organize campaigns and quality audits and support updating and modernisation of the education system. In fact every organisation is free to organize education and qualify people for tasks and functions in sport. There are no specific Quality Assurance provisions for the non-formal education system.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

While the term learning outcomes is not commonly used, the principles behind it are well known and accepted in the sport education system. Coach education and referees and officials are based to some extent on a learning outcomes approach. Also, there is a qualification framework using the same descriptors, and the learning outcomes frameworks are based on occupational and professional profiles. These profiles are not based on standards developed with branch organisations or social partners but on the expertise of educational providers.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors are embedded in a separate sport qualification framework with a formalized link to NQF.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Denmark football, handball, softball and a few other sports follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation which lead to an internationally recognised qualification. This qualification is not recognised in Denmark but this has no consequences.

⁴ <http://www.ifi.ku.dk>

⁵ <http://www.sdu.dk/health/iob/>

Future developments

Several developments are foreseen in Denmark such as the further implementation of the learning outcomes approach, the referencing to the national level and if possible to the international level and the promotion of the cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems. A formalized relation between the formal and non-formal education systems in the field of sport could lead to recognition of qualifications and other forms of cooperation. However, the systems are so different that this will be challenging. Denmark indicated that the topic of validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences in sport should be addressed by the Council in future actions.

ESTONIA

Implementation of NQF

Estonia is implementing a comprehensive national qualifications framework for lifelong learning, including all state recognised qualifications. The overarching framework brings together sub frameworks for higher education qualifications, VET qualifications, general education, and occupational qualifications. The ambition of the NQF in Estonia is to be a tool for transparency and communication and, and at the same time, to be a tool for reforming lifelong learning. It is expected that implementation of an overarching NQF will increase the coherence of education and training and help to introduce coherent methods for standard-setting. Other important policy objectives are to increase adult participation in lifelong learning decrease early school leaving and drop outs. A key priority is to improve the quality of education and especially the relevance of VET to the needs of the labour market.

The Estonian NQF has reached an early operational stage, the Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Qualifications Authority being the main bodies involved. The Qualifications Authority coordinates 16 professional councils and keeps a register of competence-based qualifications; it cooperates with other institutions, e.g. the National Examination and Qualifications Centre and the Quality Agency for Higher Education.

The NQF is based on eight levels. Level descriptors for lifelong learning are identical to EQF level descriptors. They are defined as knowledge (theoretical and factual), skills (cognitive skills – use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking – and practical skills, i.e. manual dexterity and use of methods, materials, tools and instruments) and scope of responsibility and autonomy. More detailed descriptors have been developed in the sub frameworks for general education, initial vocational education, higher education and occupational qualifications.

Two types of qualification, the formal educational qualifications, which are awarded after completion of educational programmes at all levels (general, vocational, higher) and the occupational qualifications, where individuals are issued a certificate of knowledge, skills and competences required for working in a specific occupation or profession, are included. Both type of qualifications have to be defined in learning outcomes-based qualification standards (curriculum or professional standards), awarded by accredited institutions and be quality assured.

Introducing a learning outcomes approach is an important part of the national reform programme for education. Linked to this is an increased focus on recognition of prior learning. The learning outcomes of different types of VET are described in the vocational education standard and correspond to levels 2 to 4 of the NQF. All types of VET will be formally linked with NQF levels by the end of 2013. A new VET Law is expected in 2013, which also envisages level 5 VET qualifications. Programmes in VET are modularised and outcomes-based. All programmes will be reassessed in the future, taking into consideration possible changes in the occupational (professional) standards, aiming at increased compatibility of educational and professional (occupational) qualifications. There will be step-by- step development in each sector. All initial VET study programmes will be learning outcomes based by 2014.

The sub framework for higher education, reflecting the principles of the European higher education area, was adopted in August 2007 and described by the standard of higher education. General descriptors follow the logic of Dublin descriptors, but are adjusted to national needs. New learning programmes have been implemented in higher education institutions from September 2009. The

Universities Act and Applied Higher Education Institutions Act now allow for accreditation of prior and experiential learning in higher education curricula.

Estonia referenced the Estonian qualifications framework to the EQF and self-certified the compatibility of the Estonian qualifications framework for higher education with the QF-EHEA in October 2011.

Sport sector

In Estonia the general formal education institutes in Higher Education offer education and training in the sportsector mainly for teachers of physical education, coaching, sport management and research.

In the field of sport for example the Universities of Tartu and Tallin offer degrees in Higher Secondary School Teacher Education for Physical education and Sport, in addition to specialization in training for research, recreation management and administration in sport.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials, para-medical practitioners in sport and sport managers. Special courses and educational activities are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, and specific training academies for sport coaches and instructors for functions and tasks in sport organisations, clubs, fitness and outdoor sports. Referees and officials are mainly educated through the sport federations, while para-medical practitioners often get their education through branch organisations and private educational institutes. Sport federations and specific training academies offer education in sport management. It is estimated that in between 50- 100 educational providers are active with the Olympic Committee, federations and the Educational Foundation involved. The providers are recognised by the government, the state delegated sport governing body and the sport and branch organisations themselves. 150 – 200 people are annually qualified through this education system mainly for the organized sport.

The national government's role towards the non-formal educational system in the sport sector is legislation, authorisation and accreditation. The state recognised sport governing body is responsible for the general framework, regulations and requirements and the financial support. It regulates the access of the education and training, the curriculum, the assessments and the auditing and the funding. It provides financial support to providers and participants based on the direct costs of the education and the type of participants and under the conditions that the qualifications are part of the qualification framework and has a learning outcomes approach. Moreover, campaigns to promote education for coaches, projects for updating and modernisation of the education programmes are supported and grants for sport organisations are partly based on the number of qualified coaches, officials etc.

In Estonia there are no further specific provisions for quality assurance organised by the educational providers or the government than the legislative framework and authorisation and monitoring.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Most of the educational activities offered for coach education by sport organisations and academies in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach. Sport qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level

descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organisations, employers and employees. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks but include assessment and validation systems, curriculum, validation mechanism for recognition of non formal and informal learning experiences and the room for individual educational pathways.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines and fitness and outdoor sports) are completely and directly integrated in the NQF.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Estonia sports not only follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation but football, judo and other martial arts follow the international standards but are also included in the national sport qualification framework. This means that through reconciliation of the curriculum, way of assessment and examination the programmes are amended with missing topics.

Future developments

Estonia foresees the further implementation of the learning outcomes approach and the promotion of cooperation between formal and non formal education systems. A formal relation between the two (formal and non formal) education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of shared assessments, the curriculum and sport specific practice.

A future challenge will be the development of quality of life-type physical activity services which is requiring more educated workforce, new and partly overlapping outcomes and qualifications.

FINLAND

Implementation of NQF

The development of the Finnish National Qualification Framework started in 2008. With the adoption of the Act on a National Framework for Exam-based and other Competences in 2013 the framework got its legal status. The comprehensive Finnish NQF covers officially recognised qualifications (general, vocational education and training and higher education) at all levels. The framework is also intended to (gradually) open up towards competences acquired outside the existing formal qualifications system, for example linked to continuing training in the labour market. The framework will also cover official qualifications awarded outside the remit of the Ministry of Education and Culture, for example related to the armed services, police, and prison and rescue services.

Transparency and comparability of qualifications, at national and European level, are core objectives of the NQF. Describing all existing qualifications in a coherent way and by using a consistent conceptual approach illustrates the relationship between different qualifications and clarify how individuals can make progress within the system and how they can build pathways based on experience and/or on formal learning.

The framework introduces the concept of 'extensive competence modules' to be able to address acquired learning outcomes that are not part of the existing qualifications system. These competence modules are relevant in regulated professions, where legal requirements for certifications beyond initial education and training exist, (e.g. health, teaching, construction) and in all professions where there is need for increased competences and specialisations beyond initial education and training. The need to improve the visibility and valuing of 'specialisations' beyond initial education and training, will get priority. These specialisations form a significant part of the existing Finnish lifelong learning landscape (in vocational training, higher education and in liberal adult education). 'Extensive competence modules' will be covered only gradually by the framework.

An eight-level framework reflecting (but slightly adjusting) the knowledge, skills and competence components introduced by the EQF has been introduced. The descriptors have been inspired by the EQF but adopted to suit the national context; this is particularly so for competence, where additional aspects like entrepreneurship and languages have been added. This may help strengthen the dimensions of key-competences and lifelong learning. The aspect 'evaluation' specifies that individuals must be able to reflect on their knowledge, skills and competences and to judge how to improve them. The descriptors for levels 6 to 8 use the same basic approach but also reflect the specific needs for higher education. The level descriptors do not distinguish explicitly between the different dimensions of learning outcomes.

To ensure the clarity of the education and qualifications system, all qualifications of a certain type would normally be placed at the same level in the framework, but some exceptions have been identified. Individual VET qualifications may be placed at one level higher than the basic qualification if the requirement level clearly differs from other qualifications of the same type.

Through the NQF the use of learning outcomes will be promoted for describing expectations to individuals and for improving the quality and consistency of the education and training provisions and institutions themselves. While learning outcomes are used widely in almost all education and training sectors, their interpretation still varies. The priority given to learning outcomes can be seen as a precondition for further developing arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning. So far, the National Board of Education has drafted national qualification requirements for each competence-based qualification, including areas of assessment and standards/criteria for passing/failing. Such requirements are legally binding and therefore guide validation work carried out

at the provider level by the tripartite assessment teams. In terms of higher education no standards exist as such.

Preparations for referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF have been going on in parallel to the work on the NQF proposal itself. EQF referencing will take place – given a decision by the Parliament – in 2013.

Sport Sector

In Finland the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sportsector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The University of Jyväskylä⁶, the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Vierumäki⁷ and the Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences⁸ are licensed to provide higher education qualifications for coaches and instructors. The University of Jyväskylä offer degrees for coaches and PE teachers; bachelor (EQF level 6), masters (EQF level 7) and doctoral degrees (EQF level 8) in Sports Science. Universities of Applied sciences offer bachelor degree for sport instructors (EQF level 6). Also eleven sport institutes⁹ offer competence-based qualifications in coaching. In these qualifications, vocational skills are demonstrated in tests set in real-life situations (EQF level 4 and 5). Sport institutes offer Initial VET (upper secondary education, EQF level 4) sports Instructor qualifications.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

Alongside the formal education system there is an education system for coaches, trainers, instructors, referees and/or other officials in the sport sector. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers and instructors are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, specific training academies (sport institutes), branch organisations, private educational institutes and professional sport clubs which are not part of the formal education system. Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by federations while sport and para-medical courses are often organised through private educational institutes, Sport management and courses for board members are offered by sport federations and specific training academies in sport (sport institutes). It is estimated that in between 50-100 providers are active in particular all federations and specific academies.

The national government role towards the non-formal educational system in the sport sector is providing financial assistance to educational providers and clubs and for updating and modernisation of education. Sport Institutes (11 national and 3 regional sport institutes) offer non-formal education

⁶ <http://www.jyu.fi>

⁷ <http://www.haag-helia.fi>

⁸ <http://www.ramk.fi>

⁹ Eerikkilä Sports Institute, Eastern Finland Sports Institute, Kisakallio Sports Institute, Kuortane Sports Institute, Santasport Institute, Pajulahti Sports Institute, The Sports Institute of Finland, Tanhuvaara Sports Institute, Kisakeskus Sports Institute, Varala Sports Institute and Vuokatti Sports Institute offer preparatory education for further qualification in coaching. Kuortane Sports Institute, Pajulahti Sports Institute, Santasport Institute and The Sports Institute of Finland offer preparatory education for specialist qualification in coaching. Other sport institutes are Solvalla Sports Institute, Norrvalla Sports Institute and Virpiniemi Sports Institute.

for coaches and instructors and officials. This education is partly funded by state sport budget. There is no legislation and every organisation is free to organize and qualify and partly recognising non-formal education to continue with formal education.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some of the educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed by and based on expertise of educational providers. However it should be noted that the implementation of the learning outcome approach is still limited to the description of the qualification frameworks. Change of methods has started. The National Board of Education has drafted national qualification requirements for each competence-based qualification.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) are completely and directly integrated in the National Qualification Framework. This is not the case for referees and officials and management.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Finland football and golf follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation which lead to an internationally recognised qualification. Football and golf are following the national sport qualification framework but are not described analogically with national sport qualification framework.

Future developments

The Finnish government expects that cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport could be promoted and a formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications.

FRANCE

Implementation of NQF

The social modernisation law of 17 January 2002 established the French national qualifications framework (the national register of vocational qualifications – RNCP) and the National Committee for Professional Certification (CNCP) as the principal institution coordinator of the work related to the transparency of qualification. This law introduced complementary requirement for inclusion in the RNCP/NQF: All qualifications registered in the RNCP must be possible to acquire through validation of non-formal and informal learning, by a specific process named « validation des acquis de l'expérience» (VAE- Validation of Acquired Experience).

The French NQF covers all vocationally and professionally oriented qualifications towards the skills and competencies required for the job market, including higher education qualifications integrated in the schematic LMD. The French NQF operates with less clear distinction between VET and higher education than many other European countries. It does not include certain qualifications from general education, such as the “Baccalauréat général”, which are obligatory routes for further levels of study, and therefore are not part of the RNCP.

The framework covers qualifications awarded by French ministries which have specific committees (CPC) composed by representatives of the State and social partners in charge specially of youth and sports, agriculture, culture (only for some qualifications) employment, health, social affairs; by public and private establishments in their own names; by the social partners via the vocational branches; qualifications delivered by public chambers and ministries but where no CPC is in place..

To be registered in the NQF/RNCP, a qualification should meet a number of requirements; aiming at national coherence and strengthening the overall quality and transparency of qualifications.

The institutions and organisations requiring the registration of the RNCP/NQF have to provide a whole of elements making it possible to check the coherence of the standards presented with a real need for qualification on the labour market in the contents of the activities concerned and the competences evaluated like in the insertion of the holders of qualifications. Moreover, the certifications must be constructed on the basis of learning outcomes to enable the implementation of VAE. This results in a predefined process:

- Needs analysis : the evolution of the industry, the recruitment procedures of the sector, the prospects of qualifying offers, modes learning, and the relevance of the application compared to existing diplomas;
- Standard work: this is the “construction of the identity of the qualification”. This norm is defined in terms of the skills required to practice and involves a substantial contribution by professionals.
- Standards of competence: this step consists in interpreting the activities in terms of professional skills: the qualifications must be constructed on the basis of learning outcomes. Skills and knowledge associated are regrouped into larger wholes: units which consist of one or more skill set.
- Standards of evaluation: Assessment procedure established on the basis of learning outcomes.

Registration is necessary for receiving funding, financing validation of non-formal and informal learning, exercising certain professions and occupations and entering apprenticeship schemes. All qualifications registered in this national framework have a national level value and this allows qualifications to be recognized in the labour market and by the government and social partners. All the qualifications registered on the RNCP/NQF can be obtained through: initial training, ongoing training and the validation of experience acquired (VAE).

As a consequence of this structure all sort of educational institutes such as universities and specialist technical and vocational schools offer courses and certificates at a high level. These special schools are often run under the legislation of different ministries covering their respective subject areas (agriculture, sport and youth etc.), or by chambers of commerce and industry, leading to qualifications at a high level, equivalent to those from universities with a master degree.

The learning outcomes approach has only been partially introduced in higher education. Traditionally, university qualifications have been input-based and very much focused on the knowledge and research aspect. The law of 10 august 2007-1199 (*Loi sur les responsabilités et libertés des universités*, modified in 2013) creates the obligation for universities to set new services dedicated to employability. This law requires universities to improve their learning outcomes descriptions, both for employers and students. There are also many interuniversity teams working on learning outcomes with the triple purpose of helping the implementation of the VAE, the registration of degrees in the RNCP, and employability of students.

The Copenhagen process has affected both rapid and significant national policies on VET. There is a common policy on learning outcomes (expressed as 'competence') covering the entire (vocationally and professionally oriented) education and training system. This approach is broadly accepted within initial vocational education and training and gradually so by institutions operating at higher levels of education and training. The approach was strengthened by the 2002 Law with Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VAE). This VAE tool has contributed to the further implementation of the principle of "lifelong learning". By focusing on "qualifications" and no longer on training, validation of non-formal and informal learning is treated as an integrated part of the French NQF. The establishment of an inter-ministerial body (CNCP) comprising social partners and representatives of the regions and training establishments has facilitated inter-institutional dialogue to establish regulations for the use of qualification and the environment for their recognition.

The French nomenclature 1969 is currently the official reference of professional certifications. The descriptors of this classification are under review because they do not correspond to the reality of certifications and training in France.

The framework was referenced to the EQF in October 2010, using the French nomenclature five-level structure as reference point. A new referencing report will be submitted as soon as a revised nomenclature is in place.

In France, the NQF/RNCP thus represents a reference tool for all actors involved in the employment-training relationship.

Sport sector

In France professions in sport are regulated profession: coaches, teachers, sport instructor must possess a qualification record to NQF to be remunerated (Article L212.1 of the Code of Sport, Ministry of Sports). This regulation concerns the state, sports federations and professional branches of sport.

There are three main education and training system:

- The State issuing diplomas for future professional careers in sport such as: the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the Ministry of Agriculture in the field of equestrian activities,
- the professional branches of sport who through their National Joint Committee on Employment and Training (CPNEF Sports, CNPEF of Equestrian, CNPEF of Golf) issue certificates of qualification (CQP),

- The sports federations who deliver qualifications for persons engaged on a voluntary basis (qualification of coaches, instructors, etc) or professionally through Title for professional purposes (TPF).

Vocational programs of the Ministry of Sports, diplomas are composed of credit units (CU) focusing on learning outcomes. As required by law, all diplomas are developed within the Vocational Advisory Committee (CPC) that associate sports federations and all the social partners in the creation and the evolution of different certifications (Article D 335-33 of the Code of Education). In this context, the Ministry of Sport associates the sports federations in the design of qualifications, empowerment training and jury.

The ministry of Higher Education and Research developed and support an education and training programme on the level of Higher Education for the sport sector ("Science and technology of physical and sporting activities" - STAPS).

Around 50 Universities in France provide qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching and sport instruction based on a diversity of education and training programmes with a methodology which could be different from one university to the other. These institutes are often also specialised in training for management and research in sport.

Other types of education and training exist for professionals: such as sports instructors and coaches, executives of the state civil service, the sport officers sector of the territorial public service, elected managers of sports federations and professionals who already have a health state diploma (doctor or physiotherapist). These courses are offered by the public or private sector such as sport federations, specific training academies for sport coaches, professional sport clubs and public authorities, municipal and local multisport programmes and fitness and outdoor sports, university, CNOSE. These courses are not part of the NQF process, but are based on the national legislation of the vocational training.

Qualifications and courses for referees and officials are not part of the governmental formalized system and mainly offered by federations a professional sport clubs (there are more than 200.000 people active in such a function in France). For health professionals who gravitate in the middle of sports, a state diploma is required but skills sports physiotherapy (masseurs) or sports medicine are optional or take the form of additional training in the initial state diploma medicine or physiotherapy. For graduates in physiotherapy, there are two ways to develop skills in sports physiotherapy:

- Through a university diploma (DU) or Interuniversity Diploma (IUD) most often in the context of lifelong learning framework.

- Through a more specific and focused training in a public or private structure (for example provided by CNOSE).

Sport management and courses for board members are offered by NOC, sport federations, specific training academies and professional sport clubs.

It is estimated that more than 100 educational providers are active in particular all federations and specific academies recognised by the government, state delegated sport governing body and the sport or branch organisation.

The national government's role towards the non-formal educational and formal educational systems in the sport sector could be summarized as regulation, funding and accreditation of the educational providers. Based on the national legislation and directives sport federations and other accredited providers regulate the access of the education and training, the curriculum, level of teachers, assessment, audit and monitoring and further education. There are provisions for quality assurance organised by the educational providers and the government reported.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

The reform to a learning outcomes approach, introduced already in 2001 by the Ministry of Sports, had a significant impact on all certificates issued by the sports federations and/or branches of professional sports including training, evaluation and design certifications. Sports federations, depositaries of knowledge and technical skills, passed an assessment of knowledge to the certification of skills. This reform focused on the assessment of learning outcomes in relation to the professional purpose. It has promoted the establishment of bridges between different skill levels and different training (federations, professional branch, Ministry of Sports) and the implementation of skills of a professional context to another. This important work of consultation and coordination between the diplomas of the Ministry of Sports, diplomas federal (coaching as a volunteer), Titles professional purposes (TPF) and Certificate of Professional Qualification (CQP) was undertaken by the National Commission for Professional Certification (methodological guide for the development of bridges between qualifications) on the request of the Vocational Advisory Committee of sport (CPC).

The creation of the VAE, registration procedures at NQF and European initiatives have been an essential tool for the development of skills including the design and development of a common methodology for the construction of certifications from the Ministry of Sports, the sports federations and professional branches of sport.

All educational qualifications which are part of the National register and qualifications provided by federations (sport and active leisure) are based on a learning outcomes or so called competence-approach in the different subsectors of sport. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organisations, employers and employees and the expertise of educational providers. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks but include changed methods of assessments the curriculum and the validation mechanism.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) are completely and directly integrated in the National Qualification Framework.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In France football follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation. The international qualification of UEFA is recognised by the French government under the conditions it follows art 212-1 of the Code du Sport (guaranty for security of players and others; registered in NQF/RNCP). By this the football qualifications are integrated in the national sport qualification framework. No other qualifications in football are accepted as the UEFA rule out qualifications not issued by the national football federations.

Future developments

A new level nomenclature is in discussion. Particular issues are the link to occupational standards, notably the national ROME and the international ISCO and the question of whether qualifications corresponding to EQF levels 1 and 2 will play any role in the future.

GERMANY

Implementation of NQF

The *Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen (German Qualification Framework)*, DQR, is the result of development work which started in 2006, when the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* [regions] agreed to work together on it in response to the emerging EQF. A final agreement on a comprehensive national qualifications framework for lifelong learning based on learning outcomes was adopted in March 2011. After the evaluation of a testing phase in four selected sectors stakeholders extended the agreement in January 2012 to align important qualifications from vocational education and training and higher education to the DQR levels. Additionally, a proposal to establish a working group, which will align 'examples' of qualifications from the non-formal sector to the DQR, was launched in September 2012.

The DQR, with its insistence on the learning outcomes perspective, is seen as an opportunity to classify German qualifications adequately and to use it as a tool to improve opportunities for German citizens in the European labour market. The learning outcome approach is seen as a catalyst for strengthening the coherence of the whole education and training system, linking and integrating various subsystems and improving progression possibilities. It is seen as a precondition for strengthening the overall permeability (*Durchlässigkeit*) of German education and training. Learners should be allowed to move between levels and institutions according to their actual knowledge, skills and competences, and be less restrained by formal, institutional barriers. Providers of continuous training and those who provide training for groups at risk see opportunities to become part of the integrated system and offer better progression possibilities.

An eight-level structure has been adopted to cover all main types of German qualification. Level descriptors describe the competences required to obtain a qualification. The overall structure is guided by the established German terminological and conceptual approach referring to *Handlungskompetenz*. The DQR differentiates between two categories of competence: professional and personal. The term competence lies at the heart of the DQR and signals readiness to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and methodological competences in work or study situations and for occupational and personal development. Competence is understood in this sense as comprehensive action competence. Methodological competence is understood as a transversal competence and is not separately stated within the DQR matrix. The German DQR expresses only selected characteristics; the comprehensive and integrated notion of competence, underlying the DQR has a strong humanistic and educational dimension. The broad and inclusive nature of level descriptors, using parallel formulations, makes it possible to open up all levels to different kinds of qualifications. That means that higher levels are not restricted to qualifications awarded in higher education. Each reference level maps comparable, rather than homogenous, qualifications. One of key principles of DQR is that 'alignment takes place in accordance with the principle that each qualification level should always be accessible via various educational pathways'.

Orientation to learning outcomes is increasingly becoming standard in education, vocational training and higher education. In VET, competence-based training regulations and framework curricula with 'learning field' have been developed. In higher education, the modular structure and a learning outcome oriented description of the study modules are key prerequisites for the approval of a study course.

Stakeholders agreed that alignment of the qualifications within German education to the reference levels of the DQR should not replace the existing system of access. Achieving the reference level of the DQR does not provide automatic entitlement to access the next level. The achievement of the reference level has also not been considered in conjunction with the implications for collective wage bargaining and the Law on Remuneration

The referencing report was presented in December 2012.

Sport sector

In Germany the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The Sport Hochschule of Köln, educational institutes in Göttingen, Heidelberg and others are for example providing education and training programmes leading to recognised qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching, sport instructor, and not only train teachers of physical education and sport but are also specialised in training for management, research and sometimes marketing in sport.

At the present time only qualifications from the formal sector have been allocated to the German Qualifications Framework, e. g.:

Sportfachmann/Sportfachfrau:

Dual vocational education and training (three-year training course), level 4;

Meister/in Bäckerbetriebe:

Master Craftsman (Certified), level 6;

Qualifications from the higher education sector:

Bachelor, level 6 – Master, level 7 – Doctoral studies, level 8.

The NQF process in a first step aimed to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees, officials, par medical sport practitioners, sport managers and youth leaders for different parts in the sport sector: sport organisations and all sort of clubs, local multi-sports programmes and fitness and health centres and outdoor sports. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, and instructors are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, specific training academies, private educational institutes, professional sport clubs and public authorities which are not part of the formal education system. Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by federations while sport para-medical courses are often organised through private educational institutes and federations. Sport management and courses for board members are offered by sport federations, specific training academies for sport, private educational institutes and professional sport clubs. It is estimated that in between 50-100 providers are active in particular all federations and specific and private academies. Educational providers are formally recognised, or accredited by the government, sport governing bodies or sport and branch organisations themselves. Around 53.000 people are annually qualified, of which 40.000 in the organized sport sector.

The Sports associations, which are organized under the DOSB (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund – German Olympic Sports Confederation) roof, have a differentiated system of qualification which sets high standards in terms of basic, advanced and continuing training. They determine the criteria for a DOSB license of education, laid down in the “Rahmenrichtlinien für Qualifizierung” (General Guidelines of Qualification). There are more than 600 different education courses, sports, sport disciplines and profiles for basic and advanced training offered by sports organizations. More than 500.000 persons hold a valid DOSB license. Every year more than 40.000 club member finish a course of training with a DOSB license.

Partly, the government plays a role towards the non-formal educational system in sport (e.g. Study at the Trainerakademie Köln des DOSB - Coach Academy of the German Olympic Sports Confederation). These role concerns regulation (access, curriculum, assessment, audit) and financial support of educational providers, clubs and participants. Funding is based on number of participants and direct costs for education. Regarding Quality Assurance provisions for accreditations are provided by the government.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Most of the educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. Coach education qualifications are described in an expert report commissioned by the German Olympic Sports Confederation¹⁰. It uses the level descriptors of the DQR. The document is based on occupational and professional profiles developed by and based on expertise of educational providers. The implementation of the learning outcome is implemented in the curriculum, methods of assessments and validation mechanism.

Inclusion in NQF

Also non-formally and informally acquired competences shall be included in the DQR. As there are qualifications in the non-formal sector which are very similar to formal qualifications, the inclusion of the learning outcomes of this sector is promoted in a first stage. To this end an expert group was set up which will allocate to the DQR around 20 selected qualifications from the non-formal sector which can potentially be allocated by way of example as so-called anchor qualifications, and shall draw up minimum requirements for the allocation of non-formal qualifications. The competent DQR committees will discuss the results of the expert group at the end of 2013. In the list of the qualifications examined also the sport sector is included (trainer/coach).

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Germany there is no sport education system which only follows the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation which lead to an internationally recognised qualification.

¹⁰ (www.dosb.de/fileadmin/fm-sportprogesundheit/Expertise_DQR_Ansicht.pdf).

GREECE

Implementation of NQF

Greece is currently developing a NQF for lifelong learning (Hellenic qualifications framework, HQF), which aims to include all parts and levels of education, training and qualification. The new Act on Lifelong Learning (Act 3879/10) was put in force in September 2010, introducing the development of the HQF and the concept of learning outcomes as essential elements of awards. The NQF is used as a development instrument for change directly linked to the country's efforts to develop a framework for further improving lifelong learning policies and practices, which will allow for recognition and certification of all kinds of education and training, including non-formal learning. Strengthening the learning outcomes dimension in all parts of education and training will not only provide the basis for a more transparent and open qualification system, it will also allow individuals to have their learning validated and recognised throughout their lives. The NQF could help to reduce fragmentation of current subsystems to improve access and progression possibilities, to develop coherent approaches and procedures to certification and quality assurance and to have a solid basis for developing recognition for non-formal and informal learning.

The HQF will be a comprehensive framework covering all parts and levels of education and training. An eight-level structure has been proposed reflecting existing formal education and training systems in Greece. EQF level descriptors were taken as a starting point and further developed according to national needs. Levels are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. Work on level descriptors for HQF and on a qualifications framework for higher education has been taking place separately, but the final objective is to have a comprehensive framework, covering all levels and types of qualifications.

Strengthening the learning outcomes approach is seen as an important dimension of current reforms in primary, secondary and tertiary education. A system for occupational standards is currently being developed, seen as a precondition for setting up a system for validating non-formal learning. Additionally, these profiles will be used to review curricula in both initial and continuous VET and for accreditation of training programmes. The new curricula currently being developed are based on the learning outcomes approach.

Development works on the QF for higher education have started but level descriptors have not yet been prepared. It is expected that this work will reinforce the learning outcome approach in reorganisation of learning procedures and curricula to promote interdisciplinary and mobility in HE.

The referencing of the HQF of international sectoral qualifications, as well as of those qualifications acquired through programmes run by foreign universities, which cooperate with private institutions in Greece, will be a challenge. There is a clear division between non-university, mostly private, institutions and the university sector, which is public and charges no fees in accordance with the Greek Constitution. Universities have the exclusive right to award traditional higher education qualifications (MA, BA and Doctorate). Referencing higher education qualifications awarded outside traditional universities, using learning outcomes-based level descriptors, is seen as a challenge.

The HQF aims to include non-formal qualifications, mainly awarded in adult and continuing vocational training, and to support the validation and recognition of individual learning outcomes. Further work needs to be done to put the new legal framework into practice: a system for accrediting the bodies which will be responsible for certifying the qualifications awarded outside formal education is planned.

The referencing of the national qualifications system levels to the EQF is scheduled to take place in 2013.

Sport Sector

In Greece the formal education institutes in Higher Education offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

In the field of sport for example the Universities in Athens and Thessaloniki are licensed to provide qualifications for trainers at bachelor level. They offer degrees in Higher Secondary School Teacher Education for Physical education. The School of Physical Education and Sports not only trains teachers of physical education and sport but is also specialised in training for research and management in sport.

Formal education institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials and sport managers in the sport sector. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors, sport managers are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations, recognised by the government

The role of the national government is providing financial assistance based on the number of participants of the courses. The funding is regulated and audit and monitoring of education and assessments is taking place.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

It is not clear if educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. So far there is no qualification framework based on learning outcomes with level descriptors. However, coach education qualifications are no part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications for coaches, trainers and instructors, referees and officials will be embedded in a separate qualification framework with a formalized link to NQF.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Greece football, basketball, volleyball and handball follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation which lead to an internationally recognised qualification. The international qualification is recognised by the sport governing bodies in Greece under specific conditions.

Future developments

The Greece government expects new legislation and grant conditions and that cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport could be promoted. A formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport should lead to recognition of qualifications of both systems and curriculum. A challenge will be to define the different levels of qualifications.

HUNGARY

Implementation of NQF

A comprehensive NQF for lifelong learning was adopted in July 2012 by government decree. It will embrace all national qualifications that can be acquired in general and higher education and those vocational qualifications registered in the national qualifications register. As regards the qualifications awarded upon the completion of non-formal learning programmes, their inclusion in the NQF is on the policy agenda.

The national register of VET qualifications and the current revision of professional and examination requirements in VET, as well as continuing fine-tuning in the cycle system and the focus of regulation towards learning outcomes in higher education in the Bologna process, contribute to the establishment of a single comprehensive NQF.

The development of the NQF will address the harmonisation of the different subsystems, helping the national qualifications system to become more coherent, and supporting national policy coordination and improve transparency, transferability and comparability of national qualifications. It will support lifelong learning and enable stronger links between adult learning and formal education, awareness-raising related to different learning paths and in the long term, recognition of a broader range of learning forms (including non-formal and informal learning). (The NQF could play an important role in supporting lifelong learning in Hungary. Adult participation, at 2.8% in 2010, is below the EU average.)

An eight-level structure has been adopted. Learning outcomes levels are defined in four categories: knowledge, skills, attitudes and autonomy/responsibility. The descriptors were based on analysis of existing approaches in the relevant subsystems. Further, subsector-specific developments are planned.

The focus on learning outcomes has strong support among different stakeholders and is the subject of research studies in different education and training subsystems. In recent years, a number of steps have been taken towards a learning outcomes and competence-based approach. In VET, the national qualifications register (NQR) was reformed and competence-based vocational qualifications referenced into a five-level structure were developed.

The shift to learning outcomes in post-secondary VET involved the introduction of competence profiles, which are used as the basis for qualifications and curricula design and are at the core of the competence-based examination system. Qualifications consist of core and optional modules. Advanced VET has been reorganised: these programmes are now delivered by Higher Education institutions. Learning outcomes descriptions were prepared in cooperation with providers in 2012 and higher education quality assurance measures apply.

In higher education learning outcomes have appeared in qualifications requirements through regulatory measures and acts. All first and second cycle higher education qualifications in Hungary are described in terms of both inputs and outcomes criteria. However, student-centred learning, outcomes-based orientation and use of learning outcomes in designing programmes and learning units are still key challenges in Hungary.

Also in July 2012, the Government adopted a decision relating to the adoption of NQF. The decision marked the tasks and deadlines. The classification of qualifications in the national qualifications framework levels is ongoing by subsectors: vocational education, training and adult training,

general/public education and higher education. The descriptors are completed, but the classification of the qualifications hasn't finished yet. It is expected in early 2014.

In the first round the formal qualifications will be classified, non-formal qualifications will partly be covered. After the NQF is referenced to the EQF, an English-language report will be presented on the process and the results. If the report is accepted, all diplomas, certificates will contain the levels of the EQF and NQF.

Sport sector

In Hungary the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector for coaching, recreation and sport management.

In Higher Education the Semmelweis University, the successor of the Hungarian University of Physical Education, which started its operation in 1925, has a large variety of programs in terms of levels and types of qualification for the entire sport and physical activity sector. It is accredited for EQF Levels 3, 4, 6 and 7 coaching programs and covers over 80 sports based on the agreement with the umbrella organization of the National Sports Federations in blended e-learning programs. It offers degrees in coaching, sport instructor, and not only trains PE, APE, health teachers and runs a PhD School in sport sciences in Hungary. More institutes for Higher Education including Semmelweis offer specialized programs in sport management, sport related to tourism and recreation and health promotion.

After submitting the national referencing report, training providers in sport will be part of the NQF implementation process, which is built on the solid bases of the formerly independent vocational education frameworks and higher education frameworks. The currently running NQF project aims to assign qualifications both from the formal and non-formal education system and apply the validation tool.

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for coaches, instructors, referees/other officials and board members. Special courses and educational activities are offered by sport federations, sport for all organisations, and professional sport clubs for people would like to function in sport organisations and clubs, municipal and local multisport programmes and fitness and outdoor sports. But also other training providers cover the sport qualifications similar to EQF Levels 3 and 4, without a strong link to the respective National Federations. It is estimated that in between 50-100 providers are active in particular federations and branch organisations. The educational providers are recognised by the government and the state delegated sport governing body. The national government role is limited to this recognition. The Hungarian Olympic Committee is the only public body in sport, which serves as the umbrella organisation for all national sports federations, student and youth sport, leisure sport and sport for the disabled. It takes an active part in the national dialogue for matching the world of labour and world of education in sport, and whatever the government regulation sets, it is important to understand that the input was coming from the NGOs and sport stakeholders, when frames, standards or regulations are published on access, curriculum, assessments, licensing and funding.

The financial assistance is directed to clubs and participants of courses. Currently there are no provisions for Quality Assurance, but is planned to be changed by a new QA system for better quality.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

The sport qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors, but the implementation has not started yet at the EQF Levels 3 and 4 and the higher education institutes were also not encouraged to complete their own projects, especially focusing on the syllabi and daily teaching and learning activities. Discussions are underway to launch a Sport-NQF project, with a thorough revision of the present levels and types of qualifications. It can be expected that this possible project will include the further implementation of the learning outcomes approach at all levels as well. The fact, that there is no shift reported towards a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport in Hungary shows us that it will not just happen by itself unless there is a guidance provided by experts and experienced persons/organisations.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Hungary the Football and Handball Federations combine the national and international standards of coaching qualifications as there are not too many other international federations that set standards and recommend their applications. The focus on this relation between international and national standards seems to be irrelevant in a developed country where sporting traditions and sport sector's training system has a century-long history, most of the time resulting a situation that the Hungarian standards are much higher than the international ones. It is good to follow good practices and if it happens to be the international federation, their recommendations are welcome.

Future developments

Hungary foresees the setting up of a learning outcomes based qualification framework, the implementation of a learning outcomes and the referencing to national and international level. Moreover it expects that cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport will be promoted and a formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and the curriculum.

IRELAND

Implementation of NQF

Ireland has implemented a comprehensive learning outcomes based framework of qualifications (NFQ). The majority of current and legacy national awards are now aligned with the NFQ, including those made by the State Examinations Commission and Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI). The QQI was established by a government act (2012) and is the successor to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), the Higher Education and Training Award Council (HETAC), and the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB). The NFQ is also open to qualifications awarded outside the remit of national authorities. A number of awards made by professional and international awarding bodies are now recognised within the framework.

The national objective is to move towards a 'lifelong learning society', in which learners can benefit from learning opportunities at various stages throughout their lives. This led to the need for a more flexible and integrated system of qualifications that could recognise all learning acquired by learners in Ireland. The policy goals of the Irish NFQ were to create an open, learner-centred, coherent, transparent and widely understood system of qualifications that is responsive to the needs of individual learners and to the social and economic needs of the country and ease access, transfer and progression opportunities for learners within and across the different levels and subsystems of education and training.

The use of the NFQ has reached an advanced operational stage, in particular by promoting more consistent approaches to the use of learning outcomes across different subsystems. In universities and the school sector, NFQ implementation was by agreement and the impact has been gradual and incremental.

The NFQ uses 10 learning outcomes based levels. Each level has a specified level descriptor and at each level there are one or more award types also expressed in terms of learning outcomes. For each award type there are a wide range of qualifications which have been developed. The levels of the framework capture all learning, from initial stages to the most advanced; from qualifications achieved in schools, through further education and training and higher education. Each level of the NFQ is based on nationally agreed standards of knowledge (breadth, kind), know-how and skills (range, selectivity) and competence. Competence is subdivided into context, role, learning to learn, insight. Knowledge, skills and competences are defined as expected learning outcomes to be achieved by the qualification holder.

Four classes of award-type have been determined: major, minor, special-purpose and supplemental. This is to ensure that the framework is capable of recognising all types and sizes of learning achieved by a learner.

The learning outcomes approach was central to the establishment of the NFQ and associated legislation and system reforms. The outcomes are indicators of what a person knows, can do and understands, rather than time spent on a programme. The determinations for the NFQ state that new framework awards are made using learning outcomes. The NFQ is intended to act as a reference point for curriculum development leading to qualifications recognised in line with the NFQ.

Mechanisms were put in place for provider access to programme provision, based on capacity (legal, financial, structural), QA policies and procedures, the protection of enrolled learners, ability to design

and deliver programmes, ability to assess and being to comply with access, transfer and progression requirements. Also, national principles and guidelines for recognition of prior learning were developed. However, obstacles and areas for improvement in the operation and application of recognition of prior learning were identified.

The referencing of the Irish NFQ to the EQF was completed in 2009. It built on the experiences and conclusions of the self-certification of the compatibility of the Irish NFQ with the QF-EHEA, completed in 2006.

The QQI has just engaged in a 'Comprehensive Policy Development Programme' within Ireland on how it will operate. The consultation process is based on a series of Green Papers which were published in May 2013. The QQI will finalise its policies and procedures later in 2013, subject to the approval of the Minister of Education and Skills.

Sport sector

In Ireland the general formal education institutes in Higher Education offer education and training in the sports sector for physical education, the sports sciences (physiology, psychology, biomechanics, strength & conditioning, performance analysis), sport management, health and fitness, some coaching and research.

The Universities in Limerick, Cork, and Dublin, for example, offer degrees for teachers of physical education, sport scientists and conduct research in sport. The Institutes of Technology offer sport management and other sports related courses. Both seek to include qualifications for trainers and coaches at various NFQ levels 6-10.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State. *There are Further Education colleges that offer sports related courses at NFQ levels 4-6.*

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials, para medical practitioners and sport managers. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors and sports leaders are offered by sport federations (including their branches), sport for all organisations, private educational institutes and public authorities for functions and tasks in sport organisations and clubs, municipal and local multisport programmes and fitness and outdoor sports.

Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by sport federations (and branches) and public authorities while sport and para medical courses are often organised through private educational institutes and public authorities. Sport management and courses for board members are offered by sport federations and public authorities. It is estimated that in between 50-100 providers are active in the provision of education and training in sport, including all sport federations and specific academies recognised by the government and state lead sport agencies.

The national government and the statutory Irish Sports Council role towards the non-formal educational system in the sport sector is regulating: the access of the education and training, the curriculum, level of tutors, assessment, application of quality assurance mechanisms, auditing and monitoring and funding. They provide financial support to sport federations and other sport for all providers, clubs and participants based on the application of these.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

All educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. Coach education qualifications are becoming part of the formal qualification framework based on learning outcomes in the common awards format for level specifications used in the NQF. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional standards and programmes developed with sport federations, employers and employees and the expertise of educational providers. The implementation of the learning outcome approach also includes methods of assessment, application of QA mechanisms and validation mechanisms for standards and programmes.

Inclusion in NFQ

Sport qualifications of coaches, leaders, trainers and instructors (in sport disciplines) are embedded in a separate sport qualification framework (Coaching Development Programme for Ireland) with a formalised links emerging to the NFQ. The referees and officials framework has no link to NFQ.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Ireland the international standards of coaching qualifications of the international sport federation are integrated into the national sport federation coach education framework for athletics, badminton, football, GAA, rugby, tennis and a number of adventure sports.

Future developments

Ireland foresees the further development of the learning outcomes based qualification systems and the referencing of standards and programmes to national and international frameworks. Moreover it expects the emergence of the QQI will see the greater application of regulations and a growth in cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport. A formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and the curriculum. Challenges in the future are alignment of assessments between the two systems, recognition of the practical nature of sport and the quality assurance processes by federations and the capacity of federations to undertake this work.

ITALY

Implementation of NQF

Italy has carried out technical work pointing towards a national qualifications framework. Political agreement is currently being sought on how to take this technical work forward, supported by the fact that, since 2003, reforms have been implemented in education and training (upper secondary general education, VET and higher education) pre-empting the principles of a learning outcomes based NQF. The responsibility for taking forward this initiative is shared between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Education, University and Research; the process is supported by regions and social partners.

In spite of not having secured political support for an NQF, Italy has started to link its qualifications levels to the EQF. The Italian qualifications framework for higher education is already in place.

Italy faces a challenge of integrating different levels of lifelong learning systems into a coherent national qualification system. 'The absence of an explicit and adequately regulated national qualifications' framework is regarded as a barrier for taking forward coherent lifelong learning policies and validation of non-formal and informal learning and making learning pathways for lifelong learning more visible'. Also, labour market mobility between regions is hampered due to the fact that qualifications awarded in some regions are not always recognised in other regions.

The NQF levels and level descriptors have not yet been defined, although there are components in place, e.g. QF for higher education (Quadro dei Titoli Italiani, n.d.) and more recently at upper secondary level. Italy uses a learning outcomes approach and the EQF level descriptors as a basis for further developments. Eight EQF levels and level descriptors have been used directly in the Italian referencing process to link all national qualifications from formal education and training to the EQF. In the QF for higher education, Dublin descriptors are used nationally for three cycles agreed within the Bologna process. More specific descriptors are being defined for each programme by universities. Short cycle qualifications will be defined by subdescriptors taking into account differences in specific elements of qualifications (e.g. workload, length, access).

Italian education and training has introduced the learning outcomes approach at national and regional levels, with each subsystem having its own characteristics.

In vocational training, where the regions have the main responsibility, according to the Italian constitutional reform (National Law No 3, October 2001, concerning modifications of V title of second part of Italian constitution) an update of the local qualification system adopting the learning outcomes approach has been launched. Curricula will be redesigned according to EQF indicators and descriptors. Three-year vocational qualifications and a four-year vocational diploma will be awarded. Implementation started in September 2010 and will continue up to 2013. The higher (non-academic) professional education and training pathway (IFTTS) used a national standard system based on competences since 2000. After the decree of 25 January 2008, the National Committee on IFTTS agreed to update the standards to make them more coherent with the learning outcomes approach. There will be a regional supply of training courses in IFTTS (one year) and a national supply of IFTTS courses (two years): the one-year courses are already based on national standards of profiles and competence units of learning outcomes but they will be suited to local needs. The two-year courses will soon be based on learning outcomes standards.

In academic education (universities) policy-makers strengthened the need to align diplomas and certificates to the commitments of the Bologna process. In particular, the national decree reforming the academic system (first cycle, three years) and Laurea Magistrale (second cycle, two years) states

that the new programmes have to be based on learning outcomes compatible with Dublin descriptors.

The referencing report is scheduled to be presented in early 2013. Italy will reference its formal qualifications to the EQF without an NQF, adopting national methodology and criteria to present correlations between the national qualifications (and their learning outcomes) and the EQF levels.

Sport sector

In Italy the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sportsector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The Universities of Rome and Torino are for example licensed to provide qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching, sport instructor, and not only train teachers of physical education and sport but are also specialised in training for management and research in sport.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State. Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sportteachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials and sport managers. Special courses and educational activities are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, branch organisations, and public authorities such as CONI for functions and tasks in sport organisations, clubs, fitness and outdoor sports. Para medical courses in sport are often organised through private educational institutes. It is estimated that in between 50-100 education providers are active in particular all federations and some private institutions recognised by the state delegated sport governing body CONI.

The state recognised sport governing body CONI regulates the access of the education and training, the curriculum, assessment, and the licensing. CONI provides financial support to educational providers, clubs and participants based on direct costs of the education and examination under the condition it is part of the qualification framework. It is also supporting campaigns to promote education of coaches, monitoring and quality audits, the modernisation of education, the accreditation of educational providers, special provisions for qualified people and make use of conditional grants based on qualifications criteria.

In Italy there are provisions for quality assurance organised by the educational providers.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some educational activities offered in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach. Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed by the expertise of educational providers. However, the implementation of the learning outcome approach is limited to the description of the qualification frameworks developed and offered by CONI and not including methods of assessments, the curriculum and the validation mechanism.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) are embedded in a sport qualification framework but the link to National Qualification Framework for formal education seems to be different for types of coaches.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Italy football follows the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation, which regulate the access, curriculum, assessment and the content of examination. The international qualifications in football are recognised in Italy. Tennis follows the international standards as well but is integrated in the national sport qualification framework.

Future developments

Italy foresees future activities regarding the cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport. A formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport is not foreseen. Challenges in the future are the implementation of EQF principles in sport organisations

LATVIA

Implementation of NQF

In October 2010, amendments to the Cabinet of Ministers regulations on the classification of Latvian education were approved including the Latvian education stages and the respective programmes, and referencing each education programme to the LQF/EQF level. The developments build on reforms initiated in the 1990s and, in particular, the introduction of a five-level structure of professional qualifications in 1999 (through the Vocational Education Law). A revised Vocational Education Law and Higher Education Law are in preparation which will further support the implementation of the eight-level national qualifications framework. The LQF is seen as an import tool for describing the Latvian education system both for international and national stakeholders, and for ensuring greater lifelong learning opportunities for all individuals according to their needs. The qualifications framework is based on the classification of education programmes in formal education and on current education provision. Implicit levels of education have been made explicit and linked to level descriptors, which describe expected levels of learning outcomes.

The level descriptors of the eight-level framework for each of these levels are defined as knowledge (knowledge and comprehension), skills (ability to apply knowledge, communication and general skills) and competence (analysis, synthesis and assessment). When developing the level descriptors, relevant state education standards, the EQF and Dublin level descriptors, and Bloom's taxonomy were used to provide evidence.

There is growing emphasis on learning outcomes in Latvia, although the term is not widely used and there is not yet a systematic approach. Skills and knowledge are commonly used terms.

The content of vocational education is regulated by state vocational education standards, occupational standards and vocational education programmes. The occupational standards stipulate the basic tasks and obligations for the respective professional activities, the basic requirements of professional qualification, and the general and professional knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences needed to fulfil them. Vocational educational and training programmes are developed by education establishments in line with the state education and occupational standards. The framework for higher education is founded on three Bologna cycles, based on learning outcomes. In July 2011, the Parliament adopted the Amendments to the Law on Higher Education Institutions which introduced the term learning outcomes.

The system on validating professional competence obtained outside formal education is new in Latvia and was legally introduced in February 2011. Regulations stipulate the procedure for how professional competence (except for regulated professions) that corresponds to the EQF level 3 to 4 can be assessed, validated and recognised. In January 2012 the 'Regulations on recognising the learning outcomes acquired in previous education and professional experience' were approved to determine the procedures for assessing and recognising learning outcomes (for higher education) obtained during previous education or professional experience, as well as criteria for recognition.

Latvia referenced its national qualifications levels to the EQF and self-certified to the QF-EHEA in October 2011. The present referencing report is limited to formal qualifications; in a second phase, the exercise will be extended to include other qualifications accommodating the new legal regulations. In the coming years the ESF project Development of sectoral qualification system and increasing efficiency and quality of vocational education (2010-13), aims to explore professions in 12 sectors by identifying relevant knowledge, skills and competences, and place these professions on

the relevant LQF/EQF levels. Master of crafts, journeyman and qualifications acquired in non-formal and informal learning will be attributed levels in the second phase (2013-15) of NQF development and consequently referenced to the EQF.

Sport sector

In Latvia the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The Latvia Academy for Physical Education is for example accredited to provide qualifications such as:

Coach in a sport discipline

Latvian professional qualification level 4, European/Latvian qualifications framework level 5); -

Professional bachelor degree in sport science

Qualification for sports teacher, sports manager, sports and recreation teacher and specialist, senior coach of a definite sport, a sports manager, a sports teacher and a senior coach of a definite sport, a senior coach of a definite sport and a recreation specialist

(Latvian professional qualification level 5, European/Latvian qualifications framework level 6).

Professional bachelor degree in health care and physiotherapist with specialisation in sports

(Latvian professional qualification level 5, European/Latvian qualifications framework level 6),

Sports teacher, senior coach, sport manager, active tourism manager, physiotherapist

(Latvian professional qualification level 5, European/Latvian qualifications framework level 7).

Professional master degree in sport science

Qualification for sports teacher, sports senior coach, sport manager, recreation specialist

(Latvian professional qualification level 5, European/Latvian qualifications framework level 7).

The institute is part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

Alongside the formal education system there is a formalized sectoral vocational and education system for 'sportteachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials and sport managers. Special courses and educational activities are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, branch organisations, private educational institutes and public authorities for functions and tasks in sport organisations, clubs, fitness and outdoor sports. It is estimated that in between 10 - 50 educational providers are active with the majority of federations involved. The providers are recognised by the government and state delegated sport governing body. Around 2000 people are annually qualified through the non formal education system.

The national government's role towards the non-formal educational system in the sport sector is regulating the access of the education and training, the curriculum and the licensing,. They provide financial support to clubs and participants of courses.

In Latvia there are no provisions for quality assurance organised by the educational providers or the government.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some of the educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. Sport qualifications are part of a

qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organisations, employers and employees. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks but include validation mechanism for recognition of non formal and informal learning experiences.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) are completely and directly integrated in the NQF.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Latvia football follows the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation but if a football coach want to work in Latvian sport organisations financed by the government, the coach should also have a national coach certificate.

Future developments

Latvia foresees the further implementation of the learning outcomes approach and the referencing to national and international levels. A formal relation between the two (formal and non formal) education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and the curriculum.

LITHUANIA

Implementation of NQF

An eight-level Lithuanian qualifications framework (LTQF) was formally adopted through a government resolution 4 May 2010. The LTQF covers all officially recognised qualifications in primary and secondary general education, vocational education and training and higher education. The formal framework has been further strengthened through two amendments to the Law on Education (17 March and 24 August 2011) clarifying its role and function.

The development of the LTQF forms part of a decade-long effort to reform and modernise Lithuanian education and training. The national education strategy for the period 2003-12 stresses the need for flexible and open education structures, for better coordination between general and vocational education and training, and for stronger links to non-formal and informal learning.

The LTQF emerged from this strategy and addresses objectives such as better adapting qualifications to the needs of the labour market and society, improving the clarity of the design of qualifications to improve assessment and recognition and encouraging lifelong learning.

The Lithuanian NQF is based on complete (full) qualifications. However, the medium- and long-term strategy is to introduce units of qualifications defined as the combinations of the competences needed for executing certain tasks. It offers the potential for referencing the qualifications units to certain levels of the NQF, but such possibilities are not yet foreseen in legal documents. The LTQF includes qualifications awarded by formal education and training. There are currently no plans to open the framework up to qualifications offered by the private or non-formal sector.

The eight levels of the LTQF combine the previous existing structure of the Lithuanian qualifications system in VET (5 levels) and Higher Education (3 levels) with principles introduced by the EQF.

The level descriptors are defined according to two parameters: characteristics of activities and types of competences. While the distinction between cognitive, functional and general competences broadly reflects the EQF distinction between knowledge, skills and competence, the criteria on activity can be seen as a further development and specification of the autonomy, responsibility and context aspects introduced – explicitly and implicitly – in the EQF descriptors. The combination of the two parameters results in a detailed description of each level. The slightly different descriptor logics of the LTQF and the EQF are not considered to create difficulties.

The implementation of the LTQF is seen as part of a strategy to move towards a more consistent and comprehensive use of learning outcomes across education and training levels and types.

The approach is broadly accepted and implemented in Lithuanian vocational education and training. VET uses a learning outcomes (competences) based approach both for definition of standards and for their translation into curricula. The university sector is still at an early stage in using learning outcomes for defining and describing degrees and qualifications. In vocationally oriented higher education, standards are already defined and described in terms of competences. The current learning outcomes situation reflects different traditions and approaches. While VET has made some progress in standards and curriculum design, the provision of training is mostly oriented to subject and time/duration; learners are only partly able to tailor their own learning programme or pathway.

There is currently no comprehensive strategy on validation of non-formal and informal learning in Lithuania. The LTQF is, however, seen as an instrument which can promote practices in this area and political preconditions for recognition of prior learning are now in place.

The Lithuanian NQF was referenced to the EQF in November 2011, with one integrated report covering both the EQF and QF-EHEA. The report outlines a one-to-one relationship between LQF and EQF levels.

Sport sector

In Lithuania the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

In the field of sport for example the Lithuanian Sports University in Kaunas is licensed to provide qualifications for trainers and coaches at different levels. They offer degrees in Higher Secondary School Teacher Education for Physical education and Sport (bachelor and master degree).

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State. Higher education institutes in Lithuania also have opportunities to provide non-formal education supplying qualifications in the sport field (e.g. coach licence, further education and etc.). This non-formal Education is provided by 3 structural divisions within universities.

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials para-medical practitioners in sport and sport managers. Special courses and educational activities are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, specific training academies for sport coaches, branch organisations, private educational institutes, professional sport clubs and public authorities for functions and tasks in sport organisations, clubs, municipal and local multisport programmes, fitness and outdoor sports. Referees and officials are mainly educated through the sport federations and professional sport clubs, while para-medical practitioners often get their education through branch organisations and private educational institutes. Sport federations, branch organisations, private educational institutes and public authorities offer education in sport management. It is estimated that in between 50- 100 educational providers are active with almost all federations and specific and private training academies and Higher Education institutes involved. The providers are recognised by the government and the sport and branch organisations themselves. Around 125 people were qualified annually through this education system mainly for the organized sport.

The national government's department of Physical Education and Sport issues legal acts and set the requirements for the non-formal educational programs. The programs aim to provide qualification for the persons having no formal education in sport, to obtain a right to work in practical PE and sport field. The programs have to be accredited by the Department, which also is responsible for licences issuing to the persons having finished the accredited program. It regulates the access of the education and training, the curriculum, the level of teachers, the auditing, further education, the licensing and the funding. The department provides financial support to providers and clubs based on the direct costs of the education, number of participants and under the conditions that the qualifications have a learning outcomes approach. Moreover, it delivers accreditation for the educational providers and supports campaigns to promote education for coaches, monitoring and quality audits.

In Lithuania there are further specific provisions for quality assurance organised by the educational providers (quality of programme) and the government by issuing licenses and support professional

development of the providers. Department has special requirements for the content of non formal educational programmes.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some of the educational activities offered for coach education by sport organisations and other providers in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach. Sport qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organisations, employers and employees and the expertise of the educational providers. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks but include assessment and validation systems, curriculum and validation mechanism for recognition of non formal and informal learning experiences.

Inclusion in NQF

The Sport National Framework is in the process of development for all professions in the sport field with the intention to link sport qualification Framework with NQF in formal way.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Lithuania potentially all sports can follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation but they should be included in the national sport qualification framework as well. This means that for example the football federation follows the UEFA qualifications system but it has to fulfil also national qualification requirements.

Future developments

Lithuania foresees the setting up of a sport qualification framework, the further implementation of the learning outcomes approach, referencing nationally and if possible to the international level, new legislation or regulations and the promotion of cooperation between formal and non formal education systems. A formal relation between the two (formal and non formal) education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments, the curriculum and communication about the needs of specialists in the field to formal education institutes.

A future challenge arises from different types of non-formal Education suppliers. Aiming at equal Education of certain sectors it is important to provide standardised teaching of non-formal Education institutions.

LUXEMBOURG

Implementation of NQF

Following an initiative of the Ministry of Education, a first outline of a comprehensive NQF was presented to the Council of Ministers in early 2009. Based on an initial governmental go-ahead, detailed work resulted in a Luxembourg qualifications framework (CLQ) covering all types and levels of qualifications. The framework is linked to adult education and to validation of non-formal and informal learning. No separate legislative basis has been introduced for the CLQ, while the Law on VET (2008) paved the way for the framework, in particular by stressing the need to promote a shift to learning outcomes. The CLQ now moves into an early operational stage.

The CLQ is seen as an opportunity to make explicit the existing education and training levels and the relationships between them. This is important not only for the users of qualifications (to support lifelong learning for individuals and to enable employers to see the relevance of qualifications) but also for education and training providers. The explicit levels of learning outcomes introduced by the framework are expected to function as a reference point for curriculum development and may thus help to improve overall consistency of education and training provisions. Increased transparency of qualifications is a key objective and of the CLQ which also will contribute to the overall modernisation of national education and training. Being host to a large number of workers from neighbouring countries, Luxembourg sees the development of the NQF as a way to aid comparison and recognition.

Luxembourg has introduced an eight-level reference structure, with a common set of descriptors accepted by all stakeholders. While the number of levels corresponds with the EQF, the descriptors reflect the national tradition and context. At each level, descriptors are differentiated according to knowledge, skills and attitude (*connaissances, aptitudes, attitudes*). While the level of detail is higher, the relationship to the EQF can be clearly identified. This is, for example, the case for the third ('attitude') column which is based on the principles of responsibility, autonomy and context, as is the case with the EQF. The decision to use these concepts reflects gradual development of a learning outcomes or competence-based approach. Level 5 is now seen as the bridging level between both subsectors: in this level we find both VET and higher education qualifications. This means that the *Meister* qualification (Master craftsman) has been placed at level 5, beside the higher technician certificate (BTS).

The situation concerning use of learning outcomes (or 'competences') in Luxembourg education and training varies between subsystems. In initial vocational education, all qualifications have been described using learning outcomes and can be accessed via the register of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. For secondary education and training (both general and technical) progress is more mixed. The longer term aim is that the use of learning outcomes should apply to the entire secondary education system. Higher education is organised in modules lasting one semester, each constituting assessable units allocated credit points (ECTS). These modules are only partly defined and described using learning outcomes.

In a second stage, the CLQ will open up to qualifications awarded outside the existing, official system. This reflects the high number of citizens holding this kind of 'unofficial' and non-recognised certificates and diplomas. To accomplish this, specific approaches to accreditation and quality assurance of these new qualifications have to be put in place. The validation system forms an integrated part of the framework as any qualification at any level can be achieved either through school or by having prior learning assessed and validated. Validation of non-formal and informal

learning has become more important in recent years in Luxembourg and is now becoming central in the definition of priority actions for education and training. Validation arrangements are an integrated part of the education and training system, forming an alternative pathway for acquiring a formal qualification. This principle applies to all qualifications at all levels, including university qualifications. Validation may take a number of forms, ranging from granting somebody access to education and training to granting somebody a full qualification on the basis of their prior learning.

Luxembourg referenced its qualifications levels to the EQF and the QF-EHEA in June 2012

Sport sector

In Luxembourg there is no formal education institute in Higher Education that offer education and training for professions and occupations in the sport sector.

However there is formalized sectoral vocational and education system for sport coaches, trainers, instructors, referees and officials. Special courses and educational activities are offered by the sport governing body ENEPS/Ministry of Sport and sport federations for functions and tasks in sport organisations and clubs, outdoor sport and fitness. It is estimated that up to 10 education providers are active in particular sport federations which are recognised by the Ministry of Sport. Around 170 people are annually qualified through this educational system (100 coaches, 20 referees, 50 leisure instructors).

The government regulates the access of the education and training, the curriculum, the level of teachers, assessment, audit and monitoring, further education and funding. The government provides financial support to educational providers based on direct costs of the education and traditional arrangements made in this perspective. Moreover the government support campaigns to promote the education of coaches and developed special arrangements for qualified volunteer coaches. The federations also regulate the access, content and assessments of their provided courses and educational activities. In Luxembourg there are no further specific provisions for quality assurance.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

All of the educational activities offered are based on a learning outcomes approach. Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes, using the same level descriptors as formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with the expertise of the sport federations. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks by the ministry but also include methods of assessments and the curriculum.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) will be completely and directly integrated in the future national qualification framework for formal education.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Luxembourg football follows the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation and this international qualifications are recognised by the government in the qualification framework.

Future developments

Foreseen future activities in 2013 and 2014 are the implementation of the plans, referencing of the sport qualifications to national and international level and the inclusion of this new approach in the new legislation regarding ENEPS.

MALTA

Implementation of NQF

Malta has been putting its comprehensive national qualifications framework for lifelong learning (Malta qualifications framework, MQF) in place since June 2007. It encompasses qualifications and awards at all levels, provided through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Important developments took place in 2012 with amendments to the Education Act, which established the legal basis for the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), replacing the Malta Qualifications Council and the National Commission for Higher Education. Three legal notices were published: on quality assurance and licensing of further and higher education institutions and programmes; on validation of informal and non-formal learning; and on strengthening the legal basis of the MQF for lifelong learning as a regulatory framework for classification of qualifications and awards.

The MQF addresses several issues such as transparency and understanding of qualifications, valuing of all formal, informal and non-formal learning, the shift towards learning outcomes-based qualifications and the concept of mutual trust through quality assurance mechanisms that cut across all levels of the framework. The MQF is seen as an important tool to put lifelong learning and adult learning opportunities into practice. The MQF register of regulated qualifications was launched in September 2012 and is being steadily constructed. Qualifications included in the MQF should be issued by nationally accredited institutions, be based on learning outcomes, be internally and externally quality assured, be based on workload composed of identified credit value and be awarded on the successful completion of a formal assessment procedure.

The Maltese NQF has eight learning outcomes based qualification levels. Each level descriptor is defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. The descriptors highlight specific attributes such as communications skills, judgemental skills and learning skills. The level descriptors reflect complexity, volume and the level of learning expected for the particular qualification.

Strengthening the learning outcomes approach has become fundamental to reforms across education and training in Malta and has been applied across qualifications and levels in recent years. One of the tasks of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education is to introduce national standards of knowledge, skills and competences and to ensure that these are systematically implemented and used.

For general education, the national minimum curriculum defines learning outcomes as educational objectives that enable learners to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes. The school leaving certificate was redesigned following a series of consultation meetings between the Directorate of Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) and the MQC to include informal and non-formal learning as well as the individual's personal qualities. Covering the first two levels of the MQF, this initiative is intended to instil a culture of acknowledging learning achievements irrespective of the context within which the learning process occurs, from the early stages of education.

The MQF is intended to ensure that the contents of VET curricula are led by key competences and learning outcomes based on feedback from industry. Development of occupational standards and sector skills units is work in progress.

Recognition of informal and non-formal learning (prior learning) is an important part of the MQF for lifelong learning. The legal framework for validation is now in place.

In 2009, Malta was the first Member State to prepare a single, joint report which references the MQF simultaneously to both the EQF and the QF-EHEA. The referencing process stimulated further developments including, the design of an awards policy through the setting up of a new national awards system, and introducing validation of informal and non-formal learning into compulsory secondary education. In May 2012 an updated version of the reference report was presented.

Sport sector

In Malta the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sportsector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The University of Malta in Msida is for example licensed to provide qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching, sport instructor, and not only train teachers of physical education and sport but are also specialised in training for management and research in sport.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

In Malta there is a also sectoral vocational and education system for 'sportteachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials outside the formal education system. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, private educational institutes and professional sport clubs for functions and tasks in sport organisations, clubs fitness and outdoor sports. Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by federations and specific training academies. It is estimated that in between 0-10 federations and 10-50 private sport organisations are active. They are recognised by the government and state delegated sport governing body. Around 50 people are annually qualified through the non formal education and training system.

The national government and the Sport Council regulate the non-formal educational system in the sport sector regarding the access of the education and training, the curriculum, level of teachers, assessment, audit and monitoring, further education and funding. They provide financial support to educational providers, clubs and participants under the condition that the course is part of the Qualification Framework, has a learning outcomes approach and diversity of participants is guaranteed. Funding depends also on the club characteristics. Moreover there is support for campaigns to promote education of coaches, monitoring and quality audits and the accreditation of educational providers.

In Malta there are specific provisions for quality assurance organised by the educational providers (meeting standards) and the Government/Sport Council (providing framework)

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Most educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector, in particular for instructors in fitness and outdoor sports, are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with the expertise of educational providers. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks but include methods of assessments, the curriculum and the validation mechanism.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) are completely and directly integrated in the Qualification Framework.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Malta football and martial arts follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation. The qualifications are bound by international agreements on curriculum, assessments, content of examinations and access. The international qualification will be recognised in Malta the educational provider is licensed.

Diving qualifications follow the international standards but are also integrated in the national sport qualification framework.

Future developments

In Malta a formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and the curriculum. A challenge in the future will be the right balance between academic content and practical content with backing from international/ European educational bodies.

THE NETHERLANDS

Implementation of NQF

The Dutch government gave its support to setting up a comprehensive qualifications framework for the Netherlands (NLQF) in September 2011. The NLQF builds on and integrates the qualifications framework for higher education which was self-certified to the European higher education area in 2009. The NLQF is a systematic arrangement of all existing qualifications in the Netherlands, either regulated by the public sector (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports) or those qualifications awarded by the private sector outside the formal system and related to the labour market. The inclusion and classification of these private sector qualifications will take place at the request of the bodies responsible for awarding the diplomas and certificates; this is generally also the body which provides the learning programme leading to the qualification. By bringing Ministry-regulated and other qualifications together in one framework, the NLQF will provide a substantially improved insight into the levels of qualifications offered and how these are related.

The main objectives of NLQF are to increase transparency and qualification level comparability within Dutch education to all stakeholders, to promote thinking in terms of learning outcomes and lifelong learning to increase the transparency of learning routes. The NLQF has no role in reforming Dutch education and training, in regulating transfer and access, or in entitlements to qualifications and degrees. The framework is understood as a systematic arrangement of existing qualifications aiming at transparency and increased comparability.

The NLQF operates with one entry level (lower than EQF 1) and eight qualifications levels. All levels are defined on the basis of learning outcomes. The NLQF is seen as offering a new way of describing existing qualification levels. The levels do not refer to, and are not defined by, education sectors. The NLQF levels are not referenced to degrees or titles (meaning, for example, that a qualification at level 6 does not automatically belong to higher education and the achievement of this qualification does not give automatic entitlement to a Bachelor degree) and all NLQF levels are open to all qualifications of all education sectors.

The learning outcomes approach used to describe the nine levels demonstrates the influence of the EQF descriptors but differs in some important aspects. As in several other countries, making context explicit has been seen as important. The subcategories introduced for skills can be seen as a way specifying the descriptors and making them more relevant to the Dutch context.

The learning outcomes, competence-oriented approach is broadly accepted and implemented because of a strong tradition of 'objectives-led' governance of education and training, an approach which has proved conducive for a competence-based approach. Vocational education and training is probably most advanced in competence orientation after a new VET competence-based structure has been developed and implemented. The same tendencies can be observed in general and higher education, although somewhat less systematically.

The strong position of the learning outcomes approach is reflected in the relatively widespread use of validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Netherlands (EVC). The NLQF will strengthen the role of validation and turn it into an integrated part of the qualifications system. The use of validation as an integrated part of the framework will help to connect with a wider range of learning activities and learning settings, for example in the private sector. The Netherlands has a well-established system for validating non-formal and informal learning oriented to the labour market (career development) and to education and training (to shorten the education programme). Validation always takes place according to a national standard and should be concluded through the

award of a certificate of experience and/or qualification stating what the candidate knows, is able to do or understand. In 2009-10 the government took steps to strengthen the quality assurance dimension of validation: only those validation providers respecting the official 'quality code' will be able to offer validation deductible from taxes. The existing validation system very much rests on the learning outcomes and competence approach already adopted in Dutch education and training.

The Netherlands referenced its NLQF to the EQF in October 2011.

Sport sector

In the Netherlands the 6 general formal education institutes in Higher Education and around 30 formal Vocational Education and Training institutes offer education and training in the sportsector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

*The Universities of applied science in Groningen and Amsterdam are for example licensed by NOC*NSF to provide high level qualifications for top trainers and coaches. They offer degrees in coaching and sport instructors. They do not only train teachers of physical education and sport but are also specialised in training for management and research in sport. Around 30 VET institutes offer coaching qualifications in sport, fitness and outdoor sports on different levels*

These formal education institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

Alongside the formal education system there are sectoral vocational and education initiatives for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials, para medical practitioners and sport managers. Special courses and educational activities are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations. For coaches, trainers and instructors there are sport federations, specific training academies, branch organisations, and private educational organisations for functions and tasks in sport organisations, clubs , fitness and outdoor sports. For referees, officials, as well for sport managers, the education is provided mainly by the sport federations. Para medical courses in sport are often organised through small private educational institutes and branch organisations. It is estimated that in between 50-100 education providers are active in the non formal education system, in particular all federations and some private institutions recognised by NOC*NSF or sport and branch organisations. About 10.000 people are annually qualified through the non formal system, including 8000 by organized sport organisations.

The NOC*NSF together with the sport federations has the main responsibility for most of the education and training offered by regulating the access of the education and training,, level of teachers, assessment, and the monitoring of the education and the assessments. NOC*NSF provides financial support to educational providers depending on the number of assessments. It organises quality audits, support modernisation of education and is responsible for the accreditation of educational providers.

In the Netherlands there are provisions for quality assurance organised by the NOC*NSF by auditing assessments and validation of the qualification structure.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

All educational activities offered in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach. Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles which are developed with branch organisations, employers

and employees. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks developed and including methods of assessment systems.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) are embedded in a sport qualification framework but the link to National Qualification Framework for formal education is not yet formalized. The process for formalizing the link between the Sport Qualification Framework and the NQF started in April 2013. It will probably take a period of 1 year to finish this process.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In the Netherlands cricket follows the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation, which regulate the access, curriculum, assessment and the content of examination. The international qualification is not recognised in the Netherlands but this has no consequences. Football and fitness follow the international standards as well, but their qualifications are integrated in the national sport qualification framework.

Future developments

NOC*NSF foresees future activities such as the referencing to the national NQF and possible with international levels and will promote the cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport. A formal relation between the two education systems could include recognition of qualifications, shared assessments and the curriculum. Challenges in the future are the implementation of EQF principles in sport organisations.

POLAND

Implementation of NQF

The Polish qualifications framework (PQF) currently under development forms part of a broad reform of the qualifications system. The reform aims at promoting lifelong learning and putting in place education, training and learning solutions better able to respond to the needs of the labour market and society in general. The new framework is expected to be applicable to all types of qualifications obtained in general education, vocational education and training and higher education. The framework will be open to the private and non-formal sectors as long as the qualifications in question meet agreed quality criteria. The PQF builds on and integrates the work on a qualifications framework for higher education linked to the Bologna process.

The role of the framework is also to promote the shift to a learning outcomes approach and to ensure that is consistent and as an important instrument for strengthening the transparency and overall consistency of education and training, which is considered by some to be fragmented and difficult to overview and navigate.

The eight level PQF is based on three main sets of level descriptors, operating according to different degrees of generality. The universal PQF is the most generic (first degree). The second set of descriptors addresses the main subsystems of education and training (higher education, vocational education, general education). The third set of descriptors oriented towards for example specific fields of higher education (subject areas) or for VET in different economic sectors. While the coexistence of several qualifications sub frameworks is common in most European countries, the PQF tries to express how these can be made explicit within an overarching conceptual approach. All level descriptors refer back to the meta-level descriptors of the EQF and the idea is to introduce a consistent and interrelated set of descriptors meeting the needs of a diverse group of stakeholders and institutions. To what extent this approach will be able to promote communication between the different levels and subsystems can only be tested by an operational framework.

Progress has been made in defining level descriptors for the different education and training sectors. The basic distinction between knowledge, skills and social competences will be used at the subsector PQF, but will differ in terms of specificity. Level descriptors for the third generic degree have yet to be developed.

The new qualifications register is presented as a separate initiative closely linked to the PQF. The register is intended to contain a list of all qualifications which can be obtained in Poland such as qualifications awarded under the provision of laws regulating general education and higher education, other qualifications established by national bodies and qualifications established by foreign entities that are awarded in Poland. The link to the PQF will be assured by attributing all registered qualifications a level in the national framework and the EQF. It is envisaged that it will be necessary to appoint/establish an institution responsible for running the PQF and other instruments emerging from the reform of the qualifications system.

Progress can be observed in the overall shift to learning outcomes in Polish education and training. Core curricula formulated in terms of learning outcomes have recently been introduced for all the main parts of education and training, including core curriculum and assessment criteria. As of the 2012/13 academic year, the NQF for higher education, generally defining learning outcomes in eight areas of learning, will apply. Curricula for specific fields addressed by higher education institutions at the first and second cycles will have to be described in the terms of learning outcomes as well as show how they can be assessed. For third cycle studies (doctoral), regulations from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education describe the expected learning outcomes.

The introduction of validation has been seen as important for, and consistent with, the development of the PQF. The existing legal framework does not include the concept of validation and there are no central regulations addressing validation of learning outcomes achieved other than in formal education.

The PQF is expected to be referenced to the EQF in 2013. A joint self-certification to the QF-EHEA will take place at the same time.

Sport sector

In Poland the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The University of Physical education and Sport in Gdansk, the academy for Physical Education in Warsaw are for example licensed to provide qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching and sport instruction and not only train teachers of physical education and sport but are also specialised in training for management and research in sport.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

In Poland there is also a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials, para-medical practitioners and sport managers outside the formal education system. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, private educational institutes and professional sport clubs for functions and tasks in sport organisations and municipal and local multi-sport programmes. Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by federations. Sport managers follow course organized by branch organisations and private educational institutes. It is estimated that in between 50-100 organisations mainly the majority of federations and private training academies are active. They are recognised by the government and state delegated sport governing body. Around 4500 people are annually qualified as coach on different levels through the non-formal education and training system.

The national government for Sport and Tourism regulate the non-formal educational system in the sport sector regarding the access of the education and training, the curriculum, level of teachers, audit and monitoring, further education and licensing. Moreover they organize the monitoring and quality audits and the accreditation of educational providers in the area of non-formal education. Additionally, in the area of formal education the quality and accreditation are ensured by the Minister responsible for higher education issues.

In Poland there are specific provisions for quality assurance organised by the educational providers (organisation, content) and the Government by verifying the fulfilment of the criteria.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

Some of the educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport.

Starting from the academic year 2012/13 institutions of Higher Education are providing education in the fields related to sport based on the NQF and learning outcomes.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) obtained on the non-formal path are not included or linked to a National Qualification Framework as the NQF is still work in progress. However, the one gained through the formal system are connected to the NQF.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Poland no sports are reported following the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation

Future developments

In Poland the government foresees the setting up of a learning outcomes based on qualification framework, the implementation of a learning outcomes and the referencing to national and international level. Moreover, it expects new legislation and the promotion of the cooperation between the non-formal sector and formal education systems in the field of sport .The formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport is foreseen at the level of recognition of qualifications. The challenge is to convince the sport sector about the advantages of this new approach.

PORTUGAL

Implementation of NQF

A comprehensive NQF (*Quadro Nacional de Qualificações QNQ*) has been in place since October 2010 as a single reference for classifying all qualifications obtainable in Portuguese education and training. The framework, established by the Decree Law No 396/2007, was published in July 2009 (Portaria No 782/2009). Higher education qualifications have been included in framework of higher education qualifications (FHEQ-Portugal), which is part of the comprehensive QNQ.

The development of the national qualification framework forms part of a broader education and training programme, notably the 'new opportunities' initiative and the 'agenda for the reform of vocational training'. These reforms aimed to raise the low qualifications level of Portuguese population (youngsters and adults) and to promote attainment of secondary education as a minimum level of qualification in Portugal.

The QNQ will integrate and coordinate qualifications obtained in different education and training subsystems (general education, professional education and training, etc.) within the scope of a single framework, allowing people to combine and transfer qualifications. Apart from the NQF's national reform role, improving comparability and transparency of Portuguese qualifications and their understanding abroad by linking them to the EQF was also emphasised.

The NQF has reached an early operational stage. All VET is already organised based on the NQF: the databases are organised considering the structure of the NQF and the access to the financial support also takes the framework into consideration. Further, most national qualifications indicate the corresponding NQF qualification level, thus becoming increasingly visible to individuals. Education and training stakeholders are involved in the implementation of the NQF. In the labour market the QNQ is not yet known.

An eight-level reference structure was adopted to cover all the qualifications awarded in the Portuguese system. National qualifications levels and level descriptors are the same as in the EQF in terms of categories and principles. The level descriptors are defined in terms of knowledge and skills; in the third column, the term attitude is used. The term competence was already used as an overarching concept within the national qualification system as 'recognised capacity to mobilise knowledge, skills and attitudes in contexts of work, professional development, education and personal development'.

The learning outcome approach plays an important role in reforming Portuguese education and training. There is a diversity of approaches and concepts and the level of implementation varies across education subsystems. Fine-tuning learning outcomes in qualifications design with the NQF level descriptors is in progress. In VET, reforms concentrate on the learning outcomes dimension of developing qualifications standards and curriculum development. The qualifications obtained in VET subsystems are organised by the standards included in the national qualifications catalogue.

Several public policies and initiatives have been developed for validating non-formal and informal learning in Portugal. A comprehensive national RVCC system has been developed, which is nowadays integrated into the national qualification system and framework. It integrates the education RVCC process, aiming to improve the education level of adults, who have no basic or secondary education certificates and the professional RVCC process, for adults who do not have vocational qualifications in their occupational areas. Adults can acquire basic or secondary level education certificate and vocational qualification; such certificates have the same value as those awarded in formal education and training. RVCC processes are based on national standards for education and training (e.g. key competences in adult education and training reference framework) and integrated in the national

catalogue of qualifications, which is used as a reference for vocational qualifications. Access to higher education is ensured for those over the age of 23 and the introduction of technical specialisation courses (placed at level 5) also improved progression possibilities to continue studies in higher education.

Portugal referenced its national qualifications levels to the EQF and self-certified to the QF-EHEA in June 2011.

Sport sector

In Portugal the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sportsector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The Escola SuperiorUde Desporte in Rio Maior and the Polytechnic institute in Viseu are examples of Higher Education institutes which are licensed to provide qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching, sport instructor, and not only train teachers of physical education and sport but are also specialised in training for management and research in sport.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State.

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials. Special courses and educational activities are offered by sport federations and private educational institutes for functions and tasks in sport organisations and clubs. It is estimated that in between 50-100 education providers are active in particular private training academies which are recognised by the state delegated sport governing body. Around 5.500 people are annually qualified through this educational system.

The national government regulates the access of the education and training, the curriculum, the level of teachers, monitoring, funding and the licensing. The government provides financial support to educational providers, clubs and participants based on direct costs of the education and the number of assessed participants. Grants are under the condition that the qualification is part of the qualification framework and that there is a learning outcomes approach. It is also supporting quality audits and the accreditation of educational providers. In Portugal there are provisions for quality assurance organised by certification of the training providers and assessment and validation of sport qualifications.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

All of the educational activities offered in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach. Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes, but not using the same level descriptors. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organisations, employers and employees in the sportsectors. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks developed but also include methods of assessments, the curriculum, validation mechanism and room for individual pathways.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) are embedded in a sport qualification framework with a formalized link to the National Qualification Framework for formal education.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Portugal no sport follows the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation. However, in football and handball follow the international standards for qualification, but they are also included in the national sport qualification framework (double referencing).

Future developments

Portugal foresees future activities regarding referencing nationally and to the international level and a formal relation between the two education systems in the field of sport on the level of recognition of qualifications. Challenge will be the inclusion of the sport qualification framework directly in the NQF.

ROMANIA

Implementation of NQF

Romania has developed a comprehensive learning outcomes-based national qualifications framework. This brings together nationally recognised qualifications from both initial and continuing VET, apprenticeship at the workplace, general and higher education, and helps integrate the validation of non-formal learning into the national qualification system. A draft government resolution on NQF was presented in November 2011. This was formally adopted in 2013(?).

The framework builds on reform in vocational education and training and the development of competence-based qualifications since the 1990s. The comprehensive framework builds on work carried out in higher education. This work has been steered by the Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education (ACPART) and been taken forward in a partnership between universities and representatives of the Social and Economic Environment. A qualifications framework for higher education, in line with the Bologna process and the EQF, has been in development since 2005. Self-certification has been completed. One of the main challenges in recent years was to link these two development processes, structures and stakeholders from VET, higher education and the labour market in a more comprehensive framework. An important step was taken in June 2011 when the National Council for Adult Training and the Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education were merged into one single body – the National Qualifications Authority – responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive NQF. Apart from its transparency function, the comprehensive NQF is seen as a tool to support national reforms and modernisation of education and training. There is a reported lack of coherence in the qualification system and lack of progression possibilities between IVET, CVET and higher education systems.

A draft government resolution regarding the NQF has been prepared. It will provide the legal basis for NQF implementation and clarify stakeholder responsibilities.

An eight-level reference structure was proposed in the draft government resolution. Level descriptors are defined as knowledge, abilities and transversal competences: eight generic level descriptors were identified within these three categories. Knowledge is subdivided into two strands: knowledge, understanding and usage of specific language, and explanation and interpretation. The concept of abilities includes application, transfer and problem-solving; critical and constructive reflection; and creativity and innovation. Transversal competences refer to autonomy and responsibility; social interaction; and personal and professional development. The matrix makes a distinction between levels 1 to 5 and levels 6 to 8, which refer to the NQF for higher education and qualifications included in this framework.

There is a commitment to strengthening the learning outcomes approach as a part of the national reform programme. Learning outcomes are already embedded in competence-based VET reform and arrangements for validating non-formal learning. Many learning programmes developed in VET are based on competences. However, links between formal education and training and certification system are still not operational, and the two systems are not connected. Validation of non-formal learning is not recognised in the formal system.

The draft government resolution (article eight) refers to validation of qualifications obtained by non-formal and informal education to be included in the national qualifications framework, using level descriptors of the NQF.

The referencing report is expected to be submitted in early 2013.

Sport sector

The formation of coaches in Romania is carried out by:

- a) the accredited/authorized higher education institutions with specialization/perfection in a sport discipline by law based on the Protocol established between them and the National Authority for Sport and Youth and the national sport federations;
- b) the Master Degree courses with specialization/perfection in a sport discipline conducted by the accredited/authorized higher education institutions with specialization/perfection in a sport discipline by law based on the Protocol established between them and the National Authority for Sport and Youth and the national sport federations;
- c) the two years formation courses for coaches, conducted by the National Authority for Sport and Youth through the National Center of Coaches Formation and Perfection, named in the following sentences CNFPA, in collaboration with the national sport federations;
- d) other two years formation courses for coaches, conducted by colleges for coaches or other coaches' formation institutions accredited or authorized by law, based on the Protocol established between them and the National Authority for Sport and Youth and the national sport federations.

The general formal education institutes in Higher Education offer education and training programmes for the sportsector, mainly for sport science, research, sport management and coaching. Only the higher education institutes that are accredited by the Ministry of National Education for a "sport and movement performance" specialization provide qualifications for coaches. They offer degrees in Higher Secondary School Teacher Education for Physical education and Sport. The Faculties of Sport Sciences not only train teachers of physical education and sport but are also specialised in training for research and administration in sport.

At the moment, the following Universities are accredited to provide qualification for coaches at bachelor and master degree level pursuant to the applicable legislation: Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, University of Pitești, Transilvania University of Brașov, Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau, National University of Physical Education and Sport, Bucharest.

The Ovidius Constanța University, Spiru Haret University, University of Oradea, Geography, Tourism and Sport Faculty University of Craiova could deliver a master degree in coaching.

Those who graduate these studies are qualified as "coaches" pursuant to GD no. 343/2011.¹¹

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State. Higher education institutes in Romania also have opportunities to provide non-formal education supplying qualifications in the sport field (e.g. coach licence, further education and etc.). Each university is accredited to provide different qualifications, but no exact overview is available.

Alongside the formal education system there is a by the Ministry of Youth and Sport formalized sectoral vocational and education system for, coaches, trainers, instructors, and referees/officials (not for 'sport teachers'). Special courses and educational activities are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, specific training academies for sport coaches, private educational institutes, and public authorities for functions and tasks in sport organisations, clubs, municipal and local multisport programmes, fitness and outdoor sports. Referees and officials are mainly educated through the sport federation.

¹¹ The status of coaches will be implemented based on the review of the 5-level structure for the qualification and recognition of coaching qualifications, elaborated by the European Council of Coaches, a sub-committee of ENSSEE (European Network of Sport Science, Education and Employment).

It is estimated that in between 50- 100 educational providers are active in the education programmes (namely almost all federations) and the CNFPA and the Higher Education institutes involved. The providers are recognised by the government and the state delegated sport governing body – Ministry of Youth and Sport. Around 150 people were qualified annually through this education system mainly for the organized sport.

Role of government

The national government issues legal acts and set the requirements for the non-formal educational programs. It regulates the access of the education and training, the curriculum, the level of teachers, the assessments, the auditing, further education, the licensing and the funding. The department provides financial support to providers and clubs based on the direct costs of the education, number of participants and under the conditions that the qualifications have a learning outcomes approach and are part of the qualification framework. Moreover, it delivers accreditation for the educational providers and supports campaigns to promote education for coaches, monitoring and quality audits. In Romania there are further specific provisions for quality assurance organised by the National Authority for Qualifications and the Ministry of Youth and Sport regarding accreditation and assessment.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

All of the educational activities offered for coach education by sport organisations and other providers in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach. Sport qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes but not using the same level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organisations, employers and employees. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the sport qualification frameworks but include assessment and validation systems, curriculum and validation mechanism for recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications are completely and directly integrated in the National Qualification Framework for formal education.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Romania football follows the international standards of coaching qualifications (not for coaches qualifications, but for coaches licence) according to the international sport federation but the international football qualifications are only recognised as they fit in the national qualification framework as well. National qualifications are needed to be employed.

Future developments

Romania foresees the further implementation of the learning outcomes approach, new legislation or regulations and the promotion of cooperation between formal and non-formal education systems. A formal relation between the two (formal and non-formal) education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications, shared assessments, the curriculum and protocols established between the two pursuant.

SLOVAKIA

Implementation of NQF

In November 2012, the amended Lifelong Learning Act introduced the NQF into the education sector (Act No 315/2012). It will include qualifications from all subsystems of formal education and training (VET, general education and higher education). Apart from its transparency function and ease of referencing to the EQF, a comprehensive NQF has specific objectives such as to link education and labour market better, to improve the transparency and consistency of qualifications and to support validation of non-formal and informal learning and enhance lifelong learning. The NQF, with its clear learning outcomes orientation, aims to support actions to review adult learning and continuing VET.

The main pillars of the NQF are the national register of qualifications and national register of occupations. The aim of the NQF is to create a system and environment that will support comparability of learning outcomes achieved by various forms of learning and to enable recognition of real knowledge and competences independently of the way they were acquired. Unified methodology for defining learning outcomes will be prepared and used for developing and renewing state educational programmes and study programmes for continuous training.

An eight-level structure of the national qualification system was approved to be compatible with the EQF not only in connection with the structure but also in terms of principles, categories and level descriptors. Level descriptors are defined as knowledge, skills and competence. However, they will be subject to further revisions with more focus on skills descriptor to be in line with other national documents and to include qualifications acquired in non-formal education.

The learning outcomes approach has been recognised as a part of the reform agenda and is being integrated in all new developments. The modernisation programme Slovakia 21 and the National Reform Programme 2008-10 were adopted by the Slovak government to achieve better visibility of learning outcomes in the education system including accreditation processes at higher education institutions. The emphasis has been shifted to the output indicators instead of criteria focused on inputs. It aims to support employability through increased interconnection between the content of education and the demands of the labour market.

In VET, the learning outcomes approach is being reinforced through the new Vocational Education and Training Act No 184/2009 and curricula reform. Renewed examination of educational programmes helps to match better with labour market needs and demands.

The Act on Lifelong Learning aims to contribute to unified accreditation and certification practices by recognising full and partial qualifications based on competence acquired regardless of the learning setting. Development of qualifications and assessment standards included in the national register of qualifications is a precondition for recognition of non-formal and informal learning; developments are at an early stage. This will follow in the second phase of the NQF implementation. The referencing report is expected to be presented by second half of 2013.

Sportsector

The current system of sectorial qualifications in the field of sport in Slovakia is set out in the concept document - *Single Education System of Sports Expert*. It is enclosed to the Decree No. 444 on Accreditation Committee in the Field of Physical Culture of the Act No.300/2008 on Sport. Formal

system of education in sport field is regulated by national acts dealing with general education, VET education or higher education.

The Single Education System of Sports Experts (“SESS”) is a sectorial system of qualifications in the field of sport. It distinguishes five qualification levels in several sports professions/occupations (coach, referee, instructor, ski instructor/teacher, sports manager). Other specializations in sport, such as: *sports match delegate, sports administrator, organizer of sports events, sport masseur, steward*, have various qualifications levels. Its main features are that it brings together qualifications in sport field from both education systems; non-formal and formal and it pays more attention on education inputs (access requests, curricula requirements, etc) than learning outcomes.

According to SESS the two highest qualification levels out of five (4 - 5) can be achieved only in formal system of education – at universities (Bc. – MA). 5th level of SESS refers to Master level and 4th level of SESS refers to Bachelor level at university.

A number of universities are accredited to provide these higher qualifications for trainers and coaches at the highest levels. They offer degrees in coaching and sport instruction, but are also specialised in training for management and research in sport.

The *Coach* profession has 5 qualification levels. As was mentioned before, these two highest levels can be obtained only at universities (Bc. and MA.). The three lowest levels of coach qualifications (1 - 3) can be acquired by completion of special courses provided by accredited institutions of non-formal education in the field of sport.

The profession of *referee* has only three lowest qualification levels within SESS (1 - 3).

The profession of *sports manager* within SESS has two highest levels (4 - 5) which completely match with two levels of university study program “Sport Manager” (Bc. and MA).

Profession of *instructor* has five qualification levels, similarly to coach profession. These instructor’s qualifications refer also to skiing and snowboarding instructor or so called “teacher of skiing. Within SESS three lowest levels of instructor’s qualification can be acquired in non- formal education system (1 – 3) and two highest levels (4 - 5) at universities.

Other sports specializations stated in SESS (delegate, administrator, organizer, sport masseur, steward) have various levels of qualification (1 or 2 levels).

When talking about overlapping formal and non-formal system of education in sport within SESS some sports qualifications, particularly on 3rd and 2nd levels, can be obtained in both formal and non-formal system. Within the formal education system - after graduating sports secondary schools and within the non-formal system - after completion one of the accredited courses provided by a wide range of non-formal educational institutions, sports federations etc.

Certificates of 1st, 2nd and 3rd levels of qualifications in sports, recognized in compliance with SESS can be issued only by the institutions which are accredited by the *Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic* (“Ministry”). In connection with accreditation issue there has been established an *Accreditation Committee in the Field of Physical Culture* (“Accreditation Committee”), which acts as a ministerial advisory body. Accreditation can be understood as a governmental quality assurance of education programs and institutions in non-formal system of education in sport. Accreditation Committee is in charge of advising on question of accreditation of education institutions, bodies or organizations which have applied for accreditation.

Accredited institutions of non-formal education are entitled to run sport education programs, which meet state requirements, stated in SESS. They are also entitled to issue a national certificates referring to a level of specialized qualification in sport according to SESS (as mentioned before). Providers of non-formal sports education might be different kind of institutions, organizations or bodies (private or public education institutions in sport, sport academies, sport federations, clubs and associations, municipalities etc).

The ministry has started revision of the SESS in terms of making it more transparent and simple. The accent will be shifted from education inputs to learning outcomes. These changes intend to have impact on quality of non-formal education process in sport. Increased quality of education will results in better specialized skills and competencies for working life, responding to labour market needs. With regard to learning outcomes approach in sport there is intention to amend this system in terms of better control and assessment of educational results.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

None of the educational activities offered in the non-formal education in sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach. Therefore, there is a strong intention to change this approach to learning outcomes, during the process of revision of SESS, which has been already started.

Inclusion in NQF

A question of implementation of sports qualification into NQF, particularly those obtaining in non-formal education, is currently under discussion on meetings of Accreditation Committee. We have intention to revise the SESS by the end of the year 2013, as we have been preparing a new Act on Sport, which might be in force at the beginning of 2015.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Slovakia several national federations including football follow the international standards of coaches and referees qualifications according to the requirements of international sport federations. However, for entering the labour market the national qualifications issued by accredited institutions are required. That is why some sports experts (such as coaches and referees) follow a kind of “double” non-formal education.

Future developments

Sport qualifications acquiring in formal system of education will be inserted into the NQF. An issue on implementation of sectorial sport qualifications acquiring in non-formal education into NQF will be clarified by the end of process of revision of above mentioned SESS. Up to now it is a topic of public and experts' discussion.

SLOVENIA

Implementation of NQF

Slovenia has reached an advanced stage of national qualifications framework development. The development builds on a series of education and training reforms since the mid-1990s (in VET, higher education, general education and adult education) and the introduction of certification and validation of non-formal learning in 2000. A comprehensive Slovenian qualifications framework (SQF) was developed by the steering committee in April 2011, including qualifications from formal education and training (VET, HE, general education, adult education) and the system of national professional qualifications under the remit of the Ministry of Labour. It also proposes inclusion of additional or supplementary qualifications, which need to be further discussed and developed. A Law on the SQF is under preparation and will also define responsibilities of various stakeholders.

Although there is a general view that the Slovenian education system functions well in terms of permeability there is a need to strengthen cooperation and coordination between different education and training subsystems and to increase participation in lifelong learning. It is necessary to improve the link between education and certification and the responsiveness of qualifications to labour market and individual needs, and to have a reliable tool for assessing and recognising non-formal and informal knowledge and skills. A comprehensive qualification framework could support these developments including providing individualised pathways in education mainly for adults and drop-outs.

The starting points for the classification of qualifications in the SQF are the relevant sectoral legislation and the classification system of education and training (Klasius). The SQF aims to establish a flexible connection between the education and the qualification structures. Alongside qualifications awarded after completion of education programmes at all levels (general, vocational or higher) the Slovenian plans distinguish national professional qualifications, defined as work-related vocational or professional capacity to perform an occupation at a certain level of complexity, and additional or supplementary qualifications acquired in further and supplementary training and not issued by the national authorities.

The SQF has 10 levels. The descriptor for each level contains three categories of learning outcomes: knowledge, skills and competences. Each qualification in the framework includes all three categories, although it is not necessarily the case that each category has equal weight within the qualification. Such a selection of categories allows 'capture' of the full diversity of learning outcomes and qualifications that, though acquired in different settings and for different purposes, are comparable in terms of learning outcomes.

The learning outcomes approach, following reforms carried out since the 1990s, is already embedded in the education system and well accepted. Reforms have supported and broadened assessment of learning outcomes. A balance is sought in emphasising the role played by general knowledge and acquired key competences, sufficiently broad technical knowledge and certain pedagogical processes in defining educational outcomes.

In VET, the learning outcomes approach is seen as a very useful way of bringing vocational programmes and schools closer to 'real life' and the needs of the labour market. The basis for all VET qualifications is a system of occupational profiles and standards, identifying knowledge and skills required in the labour market.

The national professional qualifications and the validation of non-formal knowledge in Slovenia are based on assessment qualifications catalogues (catalogues of standards for professional knowledge

and skills). The national steering committee also decided that, in line with the second EQF milestone, the EQF number will be written on Europass supplements.

One joint report to reference national qualifications levels to the EQF and QF-EHEA is expected to be presented at the beginning of 2013.

Sport sector

In Slovenia the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for coaching and sport management and research.

The University of Ljubljana is for example licensed to provide qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. It offers degrees in coaching and sport instruction. It also train teachers of physical education and for for management and research in sport.

These institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

Alongside the formal education system there is a by the government formalized sectoral vocational and education system for sport coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials and sport managers. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors and sport managers are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, branch organisations, private educational institutes, professional sport clubs and public authorities for functions and tasks in sport organisations and clubs, fitness and outdoor sports. Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by federations and sport for all organisations while sport and para-medical courses are often organised by professional sport clubs. It is estimated that in between 50-100 providers are active and accredited or recognised by the government and state delegated sport governing body. Around 2.200 people are annually qualified through this education system.

The national government role towards the non-formal educational system in the sport sector is regulating the access of the education and training, the curriculum, level of teachers, assessment, audit and monitoring, further education, licensing and funding. It provides financial support to educational providers, clubs and participants based on the number of assessed participants. The government makes use of conditional grants based on qualifications criteria.

In Slovenia there are provisions for quality assurance organised by the educational providers including inspection of the conducted training programs.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

All educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with the expertise of educational providers. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is limited to the description of the qualification frameworks but does not include so far methods of assessments the curriculum and the validation mechanism.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) referees and officials are embedded in a separate sport qualification with a formalized link to NQF.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Slovenia handball and football follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation but these qualifications are also integrated in the national sport qualification framework.

Future developments

Slovenia foresees new legislation and regulations and a formal relation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport in particular on the level of recognition of qualifications. Challenges remain the combination of national and European regulators.

SPAIN

Implementation of NQF

Spain is currently developing an NQF for lifelong learning (*Marco Español de Cualificaciones*, MECU). It will link and coordinate different education and training subsystems. The framework will include qualifications obtained in compulsory education, in post-secondary and higher education and will integrate validation of non-formal and informal learning processes. The draft Royal decree on the introduction of MECU has now been prepared and defines levels and level descriptors as the basis for referencing the MECU to the EQF levels. It is expected to be adopted in 2013. The higher four levels of MECU will be linked to the qualifications framework for higher education (*Marco Español de Cualificaciones para la Educación Superior*, MECES), which has been put in place separately.

One of the main objectives of developing a Spanish qualifications framework for lifelong learning compatible with the EQF and the QF-EHEA is to make Spanish qualifications easier to understand by describing them in terms of learning outcomes; it should also clarify relations between them. It is expected that this will improve the extent to which stakeholders are informed about national qualifications, raising trust and making mobility easier. The NQF aims to support lifelong learning, link IVET and CVET, and improve access and participation for everyone, including the disadvantaged. It is expected that through the NQF it will be easier to identify, validate and recognise all kinds of learning outcomes (including non-formal and informal learning), regardless of the way they were acquired. It will support better use of qualifications at national and European level.

An eight-level framework has been proposed to cover all main types of Spanish qualification. The four highest levels are compatible with the Spanish QF for higher education, which is based on the Dublin descriptors. Level descriptors are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. They have been inspired by the EQF level descriptors, but adopted to suit the national context. This is particularly the case for skills, where the ability to communicate in different languages and analytical skills are emphasised. Competence is defined as autonomy and responsibility and including learning skills and attitudes. Broad generic descriptors for the NQF will be supplemented with more detailed descriptors when necessary (e.g. for professional qualifications).

The learning outcomes approach is seen as an essential part of the development of the MECU and is supported by all stakeholders. It is work in progress. It is expected that the development of both MECU and MECES will further support the strengthening of learning outcomes at all education and qualification levels to make qualifications more readable and easier to compare.

The new VET qualifications are already defined in terms of learning outcomes. The professional modules contained in each qualification gather the learning outcomes and the corresponding assessment criteria that show that the qualification holder knows, understands, and is able to do as expected on completion of the programme. These learning outcomes are closely related to work activities and required professional competences. In higher education, new study programmes have to include expected outcomes and achievement of learning objectives set for the student. All study programmes have to be accredited according to national guidelines.

In July 2009, the new Royal decree for the recognition of professional competences (1224/2009) was adopted; this regulates the procedures for validating professional competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning and professional experience. The national catalogue of professional qualifications is used as a standard for validating non-formal learning as well as for official diplomas on vocational training.

The draft referencing report is expected to be prepared in 2013. The self-certification report has been prepared. Spain has not yet decided whether there will be one joint report prepared to reference to the EQF and self-certify to the QH-EHEA.

Sport sector

Within the Spanish sports sector we must differentiate between:

- The sports system organized through sports federations, private entities with delegated public administration functions.
- Physical and/or sports activity organized on the basis of individual practice and commercial promoters or services outside the sports system and aimed at improving health, acquiring sporting habits and actively occupying leisure time.

In this context, coaches in Spain, called Sport Technicians and Senior Sport Technicians, form part of the sports system, and carry out the functions of initiation, technification and high performance in a specific modality or specialty of sport. The educational system provides the pertinent training and issues the qualifications.

Professional activity within the sports system is regulated by the Spanish sports federations themselves which establish the requirements for developing technical functions or limit the access of coaches to competition, all of which is done by delegation from the Sports Administration.

Professionals working in physical education training outside the sports system are trained at university or vocational training centres within the educational system.

There is no state regulation for the exercise of the profession within the area of physical education training outside the sports system.

Nevertheless, given the administrative decentralization of the Spanish State, the Region of Catalonia has implemented regulations affecting both professional activity within the sports system as well as physical education training outside it. Currently, other regions have similar regulations pending approval.

Formal Education and Training

The training of professionals related to the sports system and physical education outside the sports system takes place within the educational system through formal training, whether at university, through professional training or the special regime for sports training.

The following official qualifications currently exist:

- University Degree in Physical Education and Sport. (i.e. Polytechnic Madrid (INEF)). According to the data from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, there are 33 universities providing a degree in Physical Education. Each one of these universities offers a degree with specific characteristics, therefore differentiating from one another.
- Vocational training qualifications as Technician and Senior Technician in Physical Education and Sport. This formation is offered in 226 centres ('Tecnico Superior') and 140 centres ('Tecnico'). The respective degrees are offered within these centres: "Senior Technician in Animation of Sport and Physical Activities", and "Leading Technician in the Natural Environment".
- Sports Technician (TD) or Senior Sports Technician (TDS) in the particular sporting modality or specialty, under the special regime for sports training. This degree is provided by 170 institutions, 55 public and 115 private ones, all of them recognised by the education administration. These centres offer 21 titles in Senior Sport technician, in 12 different and sport disciplines.

Non-formal Education and Training

The recognized sports federations or the sports administrations are temporarily in charge of organizing coaching training in those sport modalities or specialties for which qualifications as Sports Technician (TD) or Senior Sports Technician (TDS) are not currently being offered. This training must comply with a series of previously established requirements authorized by the sports administration of the respective region. This type of "non-formal" training has the possibility of being recognized and integrated in the MECU, once the corresponding TD and TDS qualifications are published. At the time being, this training is provided by 35 Spanish sport federations, and their respective autonomous federations. The sport competent organs of the 17 autonomous communities, are also allowed to offer this training.

Informal Training:

The type of training not controlled by the Administration, and promoted and carried out by private entities which may or may not be recognized as sports federations. These entities do not meet the minimum academic or training requirements established and this type of training is not recognized in any way. We do not have valid data about the number of entities providing such informal training.

The implementation of the learning outcomes approach

Sports training qualifications under the special regime (formal training) are designed on the basis of a professional profile in terms of professional, personal and social competences which the future technician will be required to carry out in a real work environment. The profile design is based on a methodology involving the participation of sports federations, sectoral experts and professional organizations prominent in the particular modality or specialty of sport.

The training required to reach this profile takes the form of sports training modules, which are in turn expressed as learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are defined as the "series of capabilities, knowledge and attitudes acquired in the context of learning and which, when mobilized, make it possible to reach the desired goals". The series of learning outcomes described in the training associated with TD and TDS qualifications should provide sufficient evidence to infer that the persons have the professional, personal and social competences defined in the corresponding professional profile.

The "learning outcomes" methodology is applied both in defining the professional profile as well as in designing minimum training (a responsibility of the Central Administration). Based on this, the regional educational administrations and training centres are in charge of designing curricula and specifying the required training. The learning outcomes are respected and developed at all times, and serve as a reference for the student evaluation process.

Notwithstanding the "non-formal" training of sports modalities or specialties lacking TD or TDS qualifications, these conform to certain minimum requirements established by the Administration, including a generic professional profile not associated with MECU descriptors. Neither the evaluation methods nor the study plans are associated with learning outcomes.

Inclusion of sport qualifications in the Spanish qualifications framework (mecu)

Formal training qualifications (TD and TDS accreditation) are fully integrated by level within the MECU, and Senior Sports Technician qualification is classified by level within the MECES. Non-formal training, on the other hand, is not, since it does not form part of the educational system and the MECU only recognizes formal training.

The Sports Technician and Senior Sports Technician qualifications are currently found in the educational system in the areas of Athletics, Basketball, Handball, Scuba Diving, Winter sports: alpine skiing, snowboard, cross-country skiing, Mountain and rock climbing sports: mid and low altitude climbing, cliff climbing, sports climbing, and high altitude mountaineering; Fencing; Potholing;

Football / Five-a-side Football, Horseback Riding; Sailing: standing rigging / running rigging; Judo and Self Defence and Rescue and Lifeguard Training

Training activities for most of the remaining sports modalities or specialties can be found under non-formal training. Some sports federations conduct strictly private training not subject to control by the educational or sports administration, thus preventing them from being recognized, and from a professional standpoint this training competes with formal training.

Recognition by international organizations (international federations)

Most Spanish sports federations follow the international qualification standards established by their respective international federations. Spain is taking part in processes studying and analysing training in different countries. In this regard, it has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for professional ski instructor qualifications and a comparative study of ski instructor training in the European Union, or in the Leonardo Project analysing sailing training, with Spain, France, Italy, Poland and Portugal.

Future actions

The future lines of action are as follows:

1. Incorporate into formal training the training of coaches for the modalities or specialties of sport in greatest demand, where this is feasible from a professional standpoint.
2. Apply a methodology based on "learning outcomes" to the "non-formal" training of coaches for those sport modalities or specialties lacking official qualifications (not incorporated into formal training).
3. Promote formal and non-formal training in those sport modalities and specialties in which informal training continues to be offered.
4. Promote greater co-operation between the educational system (formal training) and the sports system (non-formal training).
5. Develop a procedure for recognizing the professional experience of sports coaches, allowing for the accreditation of the competences established under the special regime for sports training qualifications.
6. Harmonize the Spanish Regional Government initiatives aimed at professional regulation.

SWEDEN

Implementation of NQF

A formal decision of the Swedish government adopting a comprehensive Swedish national qualifications framework (SEQF) is expected in 2013 and the SEQF will move into an early operational stage. The December 2009 decision to initiate work on a comprehensive SEQF was primarily presented as a way to aid referencing to the EQF; the framework should make it easier for individuals and employers to compare Swedish qualifications with those in other EU Member States. While this objective still stands, later developments show that the SEQF is now increasingly playing a role at national level, in particular by addressing the linkages between formal education and training and the learning taking place by public bodies outside the education and training sector (e.g. police and customs services) and in non-formal and informal contexts.

The aim to develop an inclusive framework open to qualifications awarded outside the public system – in particular in the adult/popular education sector and in the labour market – is that a wide range of stakeholders and institutions, both public and private are offering courses and a very important part of vocational education and training is carried out by enterprises and sectors themselves. Their link to the ordinary public system including upper secondary education (*Gymnasieskolan*) offering a full range of (three-year) vocational courses is not always fully transparent and clear. An inclusive framework could increase overall transparency of Swedish qualifications and clarify options for progress and transfer. Within the SEQF all eight levels of the NQF – including levels 6 to 8 – should be open to all types of qualifications, academic and non-academic, as high level qualifications awarded outside universities and academic institutions also exist. However, an opening of levels 6 to 8 requires robust and visible quality assurance mechanisms making sure that the overall level of Swedish higher education is not negatively affected.

Providing high level education and training directly relevant to the labour market, through *Yrkeshögskolan* has attracted a lot of interest both among individuals and employers. Offering an alternative to the traditional university sector, for example by combining theoretically and practically oriented learning, the new institutions can be seen as complementing existing education and training provisions and qualifications.

The SEQF is based on an eight-level structure where each level is described through knowledge (*kunskap*), skills (*färdigheter*) and competence (*kompetens*). The explicit objective has been to develop a set of descriptors as closely aligned with the EQF as possible. While the influence of the original EQF descriptors is apparent, the level of detail has been increased: 'competence' is defined as the ability to take responsibility, to decide and act independently and to cooperate.

The learning outcomes perspective is an important and mostly implemented feature of Swedish education and training. While the term learning outcomes is not commonly used, the principles behind it are well known and accepted. The core curricula for compulsory education have recently been revised, further strengthening and refining the learning outcomes-based approach.

Universities follow national regulations on examinations, requiring the use of learning outcomes, though how these learning outcomes are translated by individual institution varies. The Bologna process has been influential, as have a number of local initiatives. A particular challenge faced is the extent to which the learning outcomes perspective is influencing assessment practices.

The development of the SEQF is seen as an opportunity to promote the work on validating non-formal and informal learning. However, a fully integrated national system for validation is not in place. National quality criteria have to be developed for this purpose, making sure that the outcomes

of education and training in the non-formal sector and individual learning outcomes meet agreed quality standards.

Referencing to the EQF will, given the adoption of the SEQF by the government, take place in 2013. A separate self-certification of the Swedish higher education system to the European higher education area will be carried out.

Sport sector

In Sweden the general formal education institutes in Higher Education and formal Vocational Education and Training offer education and training in the sport sector mainly for sport science , research but often coaching and sport management are included.

The Higher Education Institute in Dalarna, University of Stockholm and others are for example providing education and training programmes leading to recognised qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching and sport instruction but are also specialised in training for management and marketing in sport. In Boson National Sport centre vocational education is offered to young dual career athletes

These formal education institutes are part of the NQF process, which aims to assign qualifications from the formal education system, based on national legislation and awarded by the State;

Alongside the formal education system there is a sectoral vocational and education system for 'sport teachers', coaches, trainers, instructors, referees, officials, sport para-medical sport practitioners and sport managers for different parts in the sport sector: sport organisations and all sort of clubs, fitness and outdoor sports. Special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, instructors are offered by all kind of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, sport for all organisations, branch organisations and private educational institutes which are not part of the formal education system. Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by federations while sport para-medical courses are often organised through private educational institutes and branch organisations. Sport management and courses for board members are offered by sport federations and sport for all organisations. It is estimated that in between 50-100 providers are active in particular all federations and specific and private academies. There is no recognition or accreditation of the Educational provider.

There is no role of the sport department of the Swedish government towards the non-formal educational system in the sport. This role is taken by the Swedish sport confederation which regulates and funds the non formal education system but to what level is not reported. In fact every organisation is free to organize education and qualify people for tasks and functions in sport. There are no specific Quality Assurance provisions for the non formal education system.

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

While the term learning outcomes is not commonly used, the principles behind it are well known and accepted. In the sport education system but it is not clear if the educational activities offered in the non-formal educational sport sector in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach. Coach education qualifications are not part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education as this framework is still under construction.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors are not embedded in a separate sport qualification framework with a formalized link to NQF nor there is a direct link foreseen as the development of national qualification framework is still in process.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In Sweden football and basketball only follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation which lead to an internationally recognised qualification. This qualification is recognised in Sweden without conditions.

Future developments

Several developments are foreseen in Sweden such as the setting up of a learning outcomes based qualification framework, the further implementation of the learning outcomes approach, the referencing to the national and if possible to the international level and the promotion of the cooperation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems. A formal relation between the formal and non formal education systems in the field of sport could lead to recognition of qualifications. Challenges in the future will be the validation between formal and non-formal system and the possible changes as more professional enter the workforce in sport related to the position of volunteering leaders.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Implementation of NQF

A total of five different qualifications frameworks currently operate in the UK. This multitude of frameworks is partly explained by the gradual devolution of powers to the UK home nations, in particular increased autonomy being given to Scotland and Wales to determine education policy. The many frameworks also reflect the particular needs and interests of the various facets of education and training, explaining the existence of a separate framework for higher education qualifications in England and Northern Ireland and the continued co-existence of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) largely utilised for vocational qualifications and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (in England, Wales and N. Ireland) for academic qualifications for 16 – 19 year olds. In contrast, Scotland has chosen to develop a comprehensive framework (the SCQF) covering all levels and types of qualifications. These developments show that frameworks are now an integral part of education and training, and can play an important role in promoting and modernising education, training and lifelong learning. They also show that frameworks develop and change continuously. Many vocational and academic qualifications in sport, in particular sports coaching supported by the UKCC initiative, sit on the appropriate home-nation NQF.

England and Northern Ireland

The QCF mainly addresses vocational and pre-vocational education and training areas, but without including secondary education (school leaving certificates) and higher education. The QCF was formally adopted – after a two-year trial period – in autumn 2008 and is currently being reviewed by government.

The QCF is a ‘mature’ NQF which can be traced back to the framework for Scottish and National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs). In 2003 the 5 level NVQ-framework evolved into the national qualifications framework for England, Northern-Ireland and Wales. This framework introduced an ‘eight plus one’ approach, combining eight ordinary qualifications levels with an entry level for basic skills and addressing both work and school based awards. The QCF then emerged and recognises skills and qualifications by awarding credit for qualifications and units. It aims to enable learners to gain qualifications at their own pace along flexible routes and reduce the burden of bureaucracy in the accreditation and assessment of qualifications. The framework is embedded in a wider political and institutional context and is recognised as a key instrument supporting national education and training policies. The focus and content of the qualifications within the framework is significantly influenced by the direction and focus of Govt. funding for vocational education.

The QCF (and slightly different SCQF) level descriptors provide a general, shared understanding of the role of the individual and the learning and achievement at each of the nine levels. The level descriptors are designed to enable their use across a wide range of learning contexts and build on those developed through the Northern Ireland credit accumulation and transfer system (NICATS), the existing level descriptors of the QCF, and a range of level descriptors from frameworks in the UK and internationally. Level is an indication of the relative demand made on the learner, the complexity and/or depth of achievement, and the learner’s autonomy in demonstrating that achievement. The level descriptors are concerned with the outcomes of learning and not the process of learning or the method of assessment. The indicators for each level are grouped into the categories ‘knowledge and

understanding', 'application and action' and 'autonomy and accountability'. Apart from the levels, the QCF consists of a system of units and credits. The five upper levels are intended to be consistent with the levels of the framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The QCF also provides a titling convention to indicate the size (credit¹² value) of a particular qualification. The use of the term *Award* is used to signify a qualification of less than 12 credits; *Certificate* 13 – 36 credits; and *Diploma* 36 + credits. The resultant qualification, for example *Level 2 Award in Coaching Gymnastics*, would ensure the learner was aware of level and relative size of the qualification.

The learning outcomes approach underpins the English and Northern Irish qualifications systems. Actively promoted since the 1980s, this perspective is broadly accepted and implemented.

For Higher Education a separate FHEQ has been established for England, Northern Ireland and initially also Wales. FHEQ is not a regulatory framework but introduces some common objectives (benchmarks) to be pursued voluntarily and provides a language of communication supporting transparency and the positioning of qualifications to each other. FHEQ has five levels and is based on the concept that a qualification is awarded for demonstrated achievement. These levels are comparable to levels 4 to 8 of the QCF, although a different approach (descriptors) is used to describe them. The five levels of the FHEQ are differentiated by a series of generic qualification descriptors that summarise the knowledge, understanding and the types of abilities that holders are expected to have. The FHEQ is certified against the QF-EHEA (Bologna).

The QCF was referenced to the EQF in February 2010 as a part of the overall UK referencing process and the FHEQ to the EHEA-framework in 2008 and the EQF and EQF levels are promoted in all QCF and SCQF qualification materials. FHEQ is not referenced to the EQF. Preparations are under way for presenting an updated referencing report.

Scotland

The Scottish qualifications framework (SCQF) promotes lifelong learning in Scotland. The framework was originally implemented in 2001 but has since been gradually revised and refined. The framework covers all levels and types of qualifications but is not a regulatory framework. The SCQF assists in making clear the relationships between Scottish qualifications and those in the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond, thereby clarifying opportunities for international progression routes and credit transfer. The SCQF is an integrating framework helping people to get access to appropriate education and training and employers, learners and the general public to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how qualifications relate to each other and to other forms of learning, and how different types of qualification can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce. It does this by making the overall system of qualifications and relevant programmes of learning easier to understand and providing a national vocabulary for describing learning opportunities. The SCQF has a clear ambition to promote integration and progression across levels and types of qualification. While the existence of a common set of descriptors and criteria is seen as an important precondition, the development of a fully integrated framework is seen as a long term task. The SCQF illustrates the potential of frameworks as instruments for development and, to some extent, reform. The SCQF is an 'open framework' in the sense that it explicitly addresses the private sector and employers, and

¹² One Credit is a recognition of 10 hours of learning, for the 'average learner' – which is not necessarily all directed learning.

encourages these to have their training provisions accredited and included under the framework. The unit-based approach used in Scotland aids inclusion of qualifications of differing character and size. Normal procedures applied for the framework as a whole can also be used for qualifications outside the traditional, public sector. A big proportion of the SCQF database contains non-formal qualifications and also a number of 'international qualifications', notably awarded by multinational ICT companies, are included in the SCQF.

The framework is maintained by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership which is a company limited by guarantee and also a Scottish charity. The partnership is made up of the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Universities Scotland, Quality Assurance Agency, Association of Scotland's Colleges, and Scottish Ministers.

The SCQF has 12 levels ranging from access at SCQF level 1, up to Doctorate at level 12. The different levels indicate the level of difficulty of a particular qualification and increases in levels relate to factors such as the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding, academic, vocational or professional practice, required degree of integration, independence and creativity required the range and sophistication of application/practice and the role(s) taken in relation to other learners/workers in carrying out tasks. The Scottish level descriptors were revised in 2012.

It is a requirement of the framework that all learning to be included in the framework is described in terms of learning outcomes. Closely linked to the learning outcomes approach is the use of recognition of prior learning. While involved in development of RPL since the 1990s, there is still debate on how to make further progress in this field. A main distinction is between RPL as exclusively about recognition of prior formal learning and RPL as recognition of non-formal and informal or experiential learning. A toolkit has been developed for the last and more challenging form of recognition and will be used as a basis for future developments.

The SCQF was referenced to the EQF in February 2010 as a part of the overall UK referencing process and resulted in the following referencing. Integral to this referencing has been a broad mapping of the SCQF to the other Frameworks in the UK.

Wales

The CQFW is a descriptive voluntary framework developed by bringing together a number of sub frameworks already in existence in Wales: the framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ); the NQF for regulated national courses; and the quality assured lifelong learning. It embraces both academic and vocational qualifications and can be described as comprehensive. The CQFW can be seen as a second generation framework emerging from the NQF for England, Northern Ireland and Wales. In certain areas, for example for general upper secondary qualifications (GCSEs) recent developments may have consequences for the CQFW. The CQFW is positioned as a key part of Wales' lifelong learning policy and strategy. For formal education and training, the framework supports all recognised, credit-based learning within higher education, regulated general and vocational qualifications. The framework is unit-based; it defines one credit as 10 hours of learning time and has nine levels (the lowest subdivided into three) with supporting level descriptors.

The system for quality assured lifelong learning forms a third and integrated pillar of the CQFW. It takes as its starting point that all learning wherever and whenever it takes place should be valued and recognised, making the Welsh framework one of the few European frameworks where validation and/or recognition of prior learning is fully integrated.

The CQFW can be considered an 'open framework' in the sense that its unit-based approach at the outset is oriented towards a multitude of awarding bodies and education and training formats. This aids inclusion of units developed (for example) by the private sector and as part of continuing and enterprise-based education and training. This means that the procedures and quality criteria applied within the quality-assured lifelong learning (QALLL) can exemplify how an NQF can establish links beyond the traditional, formal education and training sector.

There are nine levels in the CQFW, entry plus eight levels. There are common level descriptors which apply to all types of learning programmes and qualifications. All qualifications and learning programmes within the CQFW are based on learning outcomes and must have quality assured assessment of these outcomes. The CQFW uses the level of the outcomes of learning and the volume of outcomes, described by the number of CQFW credit points as measures to describe qualifications:

The CQFW continues to grow in its own individuality, and closely mirrors the QCF and NQF. It was referenced to the EQF as a part of the overall UK referencing process in February 2010. Integral to this referencing has been a broad mapping of the SCQF to the other Frameworks in the UK.

A useful reference point for the various UK National Frameworks + Ireland + EQF can be found via: <http://www.scgf.org.uk/content/files/resources/Qualifications%20Can%20Cross%20Boundaries%202011%20Blue%20Final.pdf>

Sportsector

In the UK there is an overlap between formal, and informal education programmes.

The general formal education institutes in Higher Education offer education in the sport sector mainly for sport science, sport management and research, and to a lesser extent generic coaching is included. Within Higher Education vocational coaching qualifications are delivered by the informal system, in parallel with students' academic studies.

There are a range of institutes of Higher Education which offer qualifications for trainers and coaches at various levels. They offer degrees in coaching, sport science and not only train teachers of physical education and sport but are also specialised in training for management and research in sport.

These institutes are not part of the NQF process in themselves although they do align to the same levels.

There are also a number of formal learning opportunities offered mainly to the 14-19 year age group. Many of these opportunities (BTECs, Principles of Coaching Sport) are offered through colleges (upper secondary education) and can lead to employment or opportunities to progress to University programmes.

Alongside the formal education system there are many vocational and education opportunities in the non-formal vocational systems for coaches, trainers, instructors, referees/officials, para medical practitioners and sport managers. There is no separate sectoral system, but special courses and educational activities for coaches, trainers, and instructors are offered by all kinds of institutes or organisations such as sport federations, private educational institutes and public authorities. These programmes aim to develop learners for functions and tasks in sport organisations and clubs, municipal and local multisport programmes and fitness and outdoor sports. These programmes may be offered in conjunction with formal education institutions (Universities and Colleges) and will support those in paid or unpaid positions.

Courses for referees and officials are mainly offered by federations, many currently outside the NQF, while sport and para medical courses are often organised through federations, private educational institutes, branch organisations and public authorities and are more likely to be offered on the NQF.

Sport management and courses for board members are offered by sport federations, national sport organisations, specific training academies and private educational institutes and public authorities. There are a large number of providers including most federations; for example it is estimated that there are in excess of 200 organisations recognised to deliver football coaching qualifications. In small sports only the federation will deliver the sport's qualifications.

All accredited qualifications are awarded by government-regulated awarding organisations which will formally recognise the education providers. For qualifications that are not NQF accredited there is no formal recognition of who delivers them. Around 120,000 people are annually qualified through this system of non-formal NQF-accredited vocation education. The national government maintains the NQF in which non-formal education sits, across all sectors including sport. Ofqual in England and SQA in Scotland are the government agencies which support the development of skills and are responsible for regulation (quality of awarding organisations). The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) provides financial support for the delivery of education, through the providers based on the size of the learning and the number of assessed participants. The national sports councils (Sport England, Sport Wales, Sport NI and Sportscotland and UK Sport) support the engagement with the NQFs. As

part of this, in coaching, sports coach UK (the lead technical agency for coaching in the UK) administer a development, support and endorsement scheme called the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC). This is supported by the sports councils, and includes a requirement to engage with the NQFs.

Funding from the various funding agencies is conditional on a range of criteria (often being part of the NQF amongst other things) and proportionate to the tutor/learner contact time. Moreover these bodies support campaigns to promote education of coaches and the modernisation of education and make use of conditional grants based on qualifications criteria.

In the UK there are provisions (via OFSTED) for the quality assurance of educational providers (including their workforce training and internal QA), at governmental level (quality assuring all training that receives public funding), and through external organisations (awarding qualifications, recognition training providers, quality assuring training).

Implementation of a learning outcomes approach

All educational activities offered in the non-formal educational systems in particular for coaching and sport instruction are based on a learning outcomes approach in the different subsectors of sport. This is the case for a minority of the referees and officials qualifications. Coach education qualifications are part of a qualification framework based on learning outcomes described with level descriptors used in national qualification frameworks in formal education. The sport framework is based on occupational and professional profiles developed with branch organisations, employers, employees and industry experts. The implementation of the learning outcome approach is not limited to the description of the qualification frameworks but include methods of assessments the curriculum and the validation mechanism.

Inclusion in NQF

Sport qualifications of coaches, trainers, instructors (in sport disciplines) leisure operators/managers groundsman and others are mainly directly integrated in the NQF. The qualifications for referees and officials have no current links to NQF.

Relation to international qualification arrangements

In the UK there are no sports which only follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federations. However, a number of sports have formal or informal relationships with their international federation. Rugby Union and Football follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federations but are in the meantime integrated in the national qualification framework. In the past the FA have used an awarding organisation to award a level 3 qualification which is double branded as an FA and UEFA (B) qualification.

Future developments

UK foresees the ongoing promotion of cooperation between the non-formal and formal education systems in the field of sport using the expertise of both. A formal relationship between the two education systems in the field of sport is foreseen on the level of recognition of qualifications and the curriculum. Challenges in the future are the incorporation in the system of professions such as categories match officials, the licensing of those holding a particular qualification, the ongoing development of a framework for sport and role specific registers in sport.