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for Sport

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Expert Group "Education and Training in Sport"

State of Play

Inclusion of Sport Qualifications in NQF's

Mid term report



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1. Introduction

This report outlines the relevance of transparent qualifications in sport and describes the different education systems existing leading to sport qualifications. It summarizes the state of play of the inclusion of sport qualifications in national qualification frameworks, including international qualifications and proposes the Council further actions by the Member States in particular the Ministers responsible for sport, and the Commission.

This report is based on the contributions of experts in the field of sport qualifications and national qualification frameworks, the Expert Group of Education and Training in Sport, the inventories and country reports drafted by experts in the Member States in close cooperation with the Commission and based on several CEDEFOP reports. (See annex II and III)

The report is a description of the State of Play till June 2013 in all Member States. The state of play on the inclusion of sport qualifications in the national Qualification Framework of Croatia is not integrated in this midterm report. However, a country report on the state of play regarding sport qualifications in Croatia is included in Annex II.

A follow up of this report is inevitable, as many developments regarding the implementation of National Qualification Frameworks are still in process and the inclusion of sport qualifications is still under way in a number of Member States.

1.1. Importance of qualified workforce in sport

Member States and the sport movement recognise the need for more and better-qualified staff in the sport sector. This applies to almost all functions and occupations in sport (e.g. trainers, coaches, teachers, instructors, referees, jury members, officials, life savers, grounds men, event organizers, managers and administrators), whether they are volunteers, part time contractors, trainees or full professionals. There are many reasons for this growing demand for quantity and quality:

- Many more people participate in sport and sport related physical activities. New sport products and services are developed and more providers deal with sport activities including in other sectors (e.g. tourism, recreation, youth work, culture and education). Some of the new products and activities are challenging for the public and ask specific safety and security arrangements, in particular in outdoor sport activities.
- Sport for talented young people and elite athletes demands high level guidance, leading to more perfection, high intensity of training, scientific based methods and continuous innovation. Testing and monitor systems, digitalisation of techniques, tactics and team play, toolkits, field labs, (professional) physical and mental training are entering the sport field.
- In grassroots sport, sport is promoted as social, educational and healthy for everybody including people with a disability or chronicle disease, disadvantaged background. However, the implementation of social and educational values through sport, the promotion of an active and healthy lifestyle and the inclusion of specific groups in sport and society ask additional competences of the sport staff on all levels.
- Higher demands from the public, fewer financial resources and increasing number of provisions and providers in leisure activities, force the sport sector to improve the quality of its products to keeps its share in this market. On-going professionalization in sport requires higher standards.



- Innovations and tendencies in other sectors, such as in education and the health sector, find their way to the sport sector. The increasing importance of quality assurance in education ask specific competences on different levels.

This call for more and higher qualified people in the sport sector does not only apply to the initial education providers educating and training starters in the sector. It also concerns people already functioning in the field of sport and asks for a Lifelong learning strategy because of the dynamics and the developments in the world of sport.

1.2 Call for Inclusion of sport qualifications in NQF's with reference to EQF

The promotion for more and better qualified people in sport should go hand in hand with the development of transparent quality standards and be part of the wider development of qualification frameworks in the field of education. Without transparent qualification standards, the mobility in education and on the labour market within a country and across borders will be complicated. This is certainly the case in a growing number of Member States where many different types of educational providers (public and private, in and outside the formal education system) prepare people for functions in the field of sport and people try to enter the labour market with a qualification from other (professional) sectors or abroad. Moreover, sport is a sector where the international mobility is already high because of many international events, long term training stages abroad, tourism related sport activities with fitness and outdoor sport and professional clubs in various sports looking for the best players and staff from across Europe and beyond.

The relation to international conventions on qualifications of international sport organisations is another challenge on the national level, as vice versa the variety of qualification levels on the national level is a barrier for international sport organisations to streamline international valid qualifications.

A growing awareness of the value of the inclusion of sport qualifications in National Qualifications with reference to European Qualification Framework has been observed at different EU levels, but in particular under the EU Belgium presidency in 2010. Sport ministers of all EU Member States expressed their support to continue the implementation of the framework decision on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in the field of sport and called upon the Member States to bring all qualifications in sport in line with each other within this framework as of 2012. They underlined the relevance of including sport-related qualifications in national qualification systems so that they can take advantage of referencing to the European Qualification Framework (EQF). Moreover, it could improve the transparency regarding the validation and recognition of qualifications gained by athletes, volunteers and those people certified by non-formal sport education providers, as well as regarding qualifications required for regulated sport-related professions. In addition it could lower the barriers for those who want to make a contribution in the sport sector by recognising cross-sectoral competences and qualifications.

1.3 Workplan for sport

The EU Work Plan for Sport identifies the social values of sport, and mention education as a priority theme for EU level cooperation in sport. Annex I specifies the actions based on this priority, which includes the "follow-up to the inclusion of sport-related qualifications in NQF's



with reference to EQF. The Expert Group “Education and Training in Sport” (XG ETS) has been tasked to deliver a report on the follow up to the inclusion of sport related qualifications in NQFs with reference to EQF by mid-2013.

In its work schedule the Expert Group planned to include the topic of validation of non-formal and informal learning in and through sport and the consequences of the modernisation of Directive 2005/36 for sport regulated professions. Despite interesting developments in both fields, no substantial attention could be given in this report as in many countries no mechanism for validation are in place yet or the sport is not yet involved. In the field of the modernisation of the Directive 2005/36 an interesting pilot project was launched regarding recognition of professional qualification of ski instructors, but no results could be reported yet. Further monitoring however is essential!



2. Education systems to obtain sport qualifications

The developments in sport have increased the pressure on professionals and volunteers in the sport sector to be better prepared and qualified for a job or function. Together with the popularity and attractiveness of sport this has led to a great interest from educational providers to provide more education, courses and training for the sector. This is no longer limited to national and international sport organisations or specific National Sport Academies. Other educational institutes such as in Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training Institutes offer programmes today. In a number of Member States these developments are going hand in hand with a more open market for educational providers to organize education and trainings in the sport sector. As a result a diverse landscape of educational providers exists in many Member States, together with a variety of certificates and qualifications. Unfortunately, clear quality standards are not always present (yet) in certain fields of sport in all Member States.

In the variety of educational providers for sport qualifications four groups of education systems could be distinguished usually all leading to different types of qualifications:

- a growing number of formal education institutes regulated by the Ministry of Education,
- the sport education system of the sport federations and sport branch organisations formally regulated and often funded by the Department of Sport on national or regional level
- the sport education system run by private organisations, commercial training institutes or by sport organisations not regulated by the government,
- the sport education system run by national or international organisations on the basis of international agreements on the level of qualifications recognised by an international sport organisation

2.1. Formal education system for sport (regulated by general education legislation)

Institutes of higher education such as universities, academies for Physical Education and Sport and Higher Vocational Education Institutes offer education and training to obtain qualifications in the field of sport (e.g. science, management, coaching). In Member States such as Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, this was the main system of coach education for a long time even including programmes for lower qualifications (e.g. Latvia, Lithuania). In the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Sweden this is a more recent development. It has been noticed that coach and instructors qualifications delivered by these formal institutes not always give direct access to the sport labour market as they are not always recognised by the license systems of the sport organisations.

Regarding sport management many institutes in Higher Education across Europe have introduced programmes in this field on bachelor and master level.

Since the AEHESIS project in higher education (ENSSEE 2007) there is a database with higher education institutes in Europe that provide such qualifications. However institutes registered on voluntary bases, so the gathered data is not complete and needs to be updated. No information is available in which sports people can qualify and how many people qualify on higher education levels in formal education in the different fields of sport.



In formal vocational education and training systems (VET) there is no accurate information available since the VOCASPORT project by EOSE (2005). Moreover the information in the VOCASPORT project included formal and non-formal education systems. As many countries have different VET systems or are in the process of formalising qualifications in this sector an overview of sport qualifications provided in this system is a challenge. However, formal VET systems in for example the United Kingdom and the Netherlands show there is a growing involvement of these institutes in education and training for coaching and management in sport

2.2 Sport education system formalised by sport legislation

According the inventory, 23 Member States¹ have a specific sport education system for which the governments play a role either through sport legislation or by funding the system or supporting related activities.

In Member States with a long tradition of volunteers in coaching and other functions in sport, the sport sector, often with the support of the governments, has developed its own widespread educational systems focused on the formation of coaches, members of jury or administrators. Almost all the different sport disciplines have their own systems, often standardised and recognised by governmental sport regulations. In other Member States there is a more centralised and regulated system for sports. Depending on the tradition and policy in the Member States, the capacity of the organisation, the popularity and professionalism of the sport, the sport federations play a more or less active roll. In some Member States formal higher educational institutes such as Academies for Physical education and Sport provide these specific courses, which are regulated and accredited by the ministry of Sport.

The qualifications obtained through this system are often based on frameworks and the regulations of the Ministry of Sport, but are so specific that recognition outside the specific sport itself has been seen as hardly possible.

So far there is no accurate European overview of these education and training systems and how they are formalised, if for example a learning outcomes approach has been implemented and how many people are qualified through this system and on which level. The inventory (see annex III) provided some interesting facts, figures and trends including the role of international federations in this perspective. 19 Member States² indicated having regulation and legislation in this field and in some Member States these regulations are rather detailed. 22 Member States³ reported the financial support and funding as one of the main activities on national or regional level in this field. 17 Member States⁴ reported the presence of a learning outcomes based qualification framework but only 9 Member States⁵ have implemented this approach so far in the assessments.

Based on results from 10 Member States, around 200.000 people annually qualified in the formalized education system of the sport sector, but it could not be specified to levels of

¹ This is not the case in Denmark, Hungary, Netherlands and Sweden. In the Czech Republic the role of the government in education and training for functions in sport is limited to the higher levels. In Cyprus some coaches in clubs and promotional activities got support from the government but there is no role reported on education and training programs.

² AT, BE(FI), BE(Fr), DE, EE, EL, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK and UK

³ AT, BE(FI), BE(Fr), DE, EE, EL, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK + CZ, ES, FI,

⁴ AT, BE (FI), BE (Fr), BG, DE, DK, EE, FI, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, RO, SI and UK

⁵ DE, EE, IE, LT, LU, MT, NL, PT and RO



qualifications and certificates. Experts believe this figure is far below the real number of qualified people by this system.

	organised sport (SO)	branch organisations (BO)	others (OT)	Total
AT	-	-	-	-
BE (Fl)	7.500	-	-	7.500
BE (Fr)	865	-	535	1.400
BG	-	-	-	-
CY	-	-	80	80
CZ	1000	-	-	1000
DE	40.000	13.000	-	53.000
DK	-	-	-	-
EE	200	-	-	200
EL	-	-	-	-
ES	5.000	-	-	5.000
FI	-	-	-	-
FR	-	-	-	-
HU	-	-	-	-
IE	-	-	-	-
IT	-	-	-	-
LT	-	-	-	120
LU	170	-	-	170
LV	-	-	2.000	2.000
MT	-	-	50	50
NL	8.000	-	2.000	10.000
PL	-	-	4.500	4.500
PT	5.500	-	-	5.500
RO	-	-	-	150
SE	-	-	-	-
SI	-	-	2.000	2.000
SK	-	-	-	-
UK	90.000	20.000	10.000	120.000
Total	158.235	33.000	21.165	212.670

Table 1: annually qualified in formalised sport and non-formal education and training systems in sport

2.3 Non-formal sport education system (no public legislation)

Some single sports (new sports and often smaller or non-Olympic recognised sports) have been identified which have their own sport and education system, including its own qualifications. These sports could be found in all countries, no matter if there is sport legislation in this field or not. Interesting enough the list of sports concerned differs from Member State to Member State.



Moreover, private training academies and branch organisations offer education and training programmes leading to qualifications in certain specialisations and/or in the field of fitness and sport management.

In Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden and Hungary sport organisations have their own sport education system without any specific regulations or direct involvement of the sport government. Sometimes these systems have their roots in a governmental system as in the Netherlands and Hungary but now the (further) development is in the hands of the sport organisations themselves. The organisations have their own regulations and a learning outcomes approach is present, as this was the tradition or an upcoming development in most of these countries. No exact figures are available on annually qualified people for most of these countries, but for example in the Netherlands around 10.000 people are annually qualified through the qualification system of NOC*NSF for coaching and instructors qualifications each year.

2.4 International training and education programmes

International Sport Organisations⁶ have taken initiatives to set up education and training programmes with a system of standards and levels for the qualification of coaches, instructors and referees in their sport or branch. Although a number of these programmes in sport disciplines were developed in particular for education and training of coaches and sportleaders in Africa, Asia and Latin America, one could say that these programmes and standards were also implemented by national sport federations in some EU Member States. 13 Member States⁷ reported national sport organisations or branch organisations which only follow the international standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation or branch organisation instead of the national qualification standards. This situation is reported most often in football and sometimes in sports such as basketball, volleyball, handball, martial arts and cricket and relatively more in smaller EU Member States. International regulations are binding in various ways for topics such as the curriculum, the way or the content of assessments and the access to the courses or a combination of them.

The programs and linked to them the international qualifications are mostly recognised by national governments, sport governing bodies or sport confederations in these Member States. However in some countries the recognition depends on specific conditions, such as the acceptance of the curriculum or the accreditation/licensing of the educational provider.

More often national sport organisations or branch organisations organize their education and training programme following the standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation, but found a way to follow the national standards as well. This is the case in some Member States for athletics, badminton, climbing, diving, fitness, gymnastics, handball, judo, rugby, skiing, tennis and tracking, and in 15 Member States⁸ for football.

Experts reported that the education and training programmes and international qualification standards in the majority of sports are not based on learning outcomes. Moreover, if they are functioning like a qualification framework for international courses, the levels are often described on the content and duration of courses and the assessment methods. Recent projects in Golf, Fitness and Rugby and the development of a Global Framework for Coaches could be seen as a mind shift in these regards, but they need further analysis.

⁶ Sport organisations, fitness and outdoor sport

⁷ BG, CY, CZ, DK, EL, ES, FI, IT, LU, MT, NL, RO and SE

⁸ AT, BE(FI), CZ, EE, FR, HU, IE, LU, LV, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK and UK



2.5 Conclusions

Taking into account the developments in the various subsectors of sport there is a need to have effective sport education systems in place based on common principles and agreements. Overlooking the different education systems regarding sport qualifications in the Member States a lot of developments could be identified and all sort of initiatives are under way to qualify more people in the field of sport. How systematic the initiatives match with the real needs of the labour market in the Member States is difficult to say as that sort of research is seldom done in the field of sport. The orientation of Institutes of Higher Education, in particular of universities towards the labour market, is not optimal and even the sport qualifications of the sport sector are only in 16 Member States based on occupational and professional profiles and according the inventory just in 11 Member States developed with branch organisations, employers and employees.

It has been suggested by experts that the various education systems (formal, formalized by sport government and non-formal education) are often complementary to each other. Sport coaches on lower qualification levels are educated through the sport federations and high-level coaches through the formal education system. Cooperation has been reported by exchange of students, instructors, agreements on examination and licences which leads to a more integrated coach education system. But in the majority of countries this depends on the type of sport and often personal links, and no sustainable arrangements have been put in place. Unfortunately the situation also occurs that both education systems exist alongside each other, sometimes have overlap or even are in competition with each other and do not recognise each other's qualifications. Based on the findings in the inventory it could be questioned if the education systems are really complementary to each other and offer the optimal pathways to people who would like to qualify for a sport function. In the inventory a majority of Member States indicated that the promotion of cooperation between formal and non-formal education systems need further attention and 22 Member States⁹ foresee a formal relation between the non-formal sectoral and formal education systems in the field of sport, based on a common NQF. The levels at which this relation is, or could to be established, are the mutual recognition of qualifications, the sharing of assessments and the curriculum.

The findings of the inventory show a highly fragmented education and training system with separated systems in some Member States. With respect to an open market, one could discuss if this is the most (cost) effective system in a time that budgets are under pressure. More cooperation between the education systems could be beneficial for the student, the educational providers, the funding organisations and the sport labour market.

The Flemish School for Coaches in Belgium (Flanders) and the Sports University in Lithuania are examples how the cooperation could lead to a formally organized integrated system.

Although improved cooperation between educations systems as such could be beneficial for all parties involved, it should be stressed that such arrangements will be most successful if all qualifications from the different education systems are linked to one national qualification framework with reference to EQF. Moreover, there is a need that quality assurance systems provide sufficient guarantees that various qualifications have the value they intend to have in reality.

⁹ AT, BE(FI), BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EL, FI, HU, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK and UK



3. State of play inclusion of sport qualifications in National Qualification Frameworks with reference to EQF

The state of play on the inclusion of sport qualifications in national qualification frameworks could be still characterised as work in progress in many countries. The progress depends on the general developments in the field of National Qualification Frameworks which differs from country to country. Moreover, not all sport education systems are involved in all these developments yet.

3.1 General NQF developments

While in 2008 NQFs existed in four Member States only, five years later NQFs have become a common feature throughout Europe. According to CEDEFOP all EU Member States are developing NQFs in Europe. The developments slightly differs from country to country; eight countries are developing or have developed partial NQFs covering a limited range of qualifications or consisting of separate frameworks for Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training (VET) operating apart from each other. This is exemplified in different ways by the Czech Republic, England/Northern Ireland, France and Italy.

By the end of 2012, 16 Member States (Austria, Belgium(FL), Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom) had completed their National Qualification Framework including their referencing to the EQF. Some of the remaining countries have already a National Framework in place but are expected to complete their referencing report and process in 2013.

Education legislation in the Member States has been adapted (or is in the process of being adapted) to give a legal basis to the NQFs. However, not all types of education in specific sectors (e.g. agriculture, sport) are regulated under education legislation and it seems that sport legislation on this topic (with the exception of United Kingdom, Ireland, Malta and France), has not been brought yet into line/adapted to the education legislation and the EU recommendations on EQF.

Regarding the learning outcomes approach all countries confirmed they are using a learning outcomes based approach to define the NQF level descriptors.

Most of the countries followed the 8-level structure of EQF and the 'learning outcomes' level descriptors described in the EQF recommendation. However, Member States with the 8-level structure were not always defining their level descriptors in the same way and Member States with an NQF in place for a longer time such as France, United Kingdom, Ireland and Slovenia adapted their NQFs slightly, and their NQFs still have a different number of levels than the 8 EQF levels.

The majority of post-2005 NQFs have limited their coverage to formal qualifications awarded by national authorities or independent bodies accredited by these authorities: this means that frameworks predominantly cover initial qualifications offered by public education and training institutions. While there are exceptions to this general picture, most NQFs do not or only partly cover the education and training activities taking place in the non-formal and private sector, largely failing to address continuing and further education and training.



A few countries, like the Netherlands and Sweden, have started working on procedures for including non-formal and private sector qualifications and certificates. Several countries (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Norway and Slovenia) have indicated that this opening up towards the non-formal sector will be addressed in a second stage of their framework developments. No information is available yet on how far the sport qualifications will be involved.

Some established frameworks, for example in France and the United Kingdom, have put in place procedures allowing 'non-traditional' qualifications to be included in the frameworks.

A key challenge faced by countries wanting to go beyond strictly regulated formal education and training is to ensure that the new qualifications in the framework can be trusted and meet basic quality requirements.

3.2. Inclusion in NQFs of sport qualifications obtained in formal education

The inclusion of sport qualifications that are obtained through formal education in recognised educational institutes for vocational education and training in Member States (in particular where they were already part of the qualification framework in the past) does not encounter serious problems in the United Kingdom, France, Netherlands and Ireland. In countries where formal vocational education and training institutes are still in development, no overview is available about sport qualifications involved. The roles of sport organisations and sport employers and employees are often recognised in the formal Vocational Education and Training institutes in Member States. Professional profiles defined by social partners are increasingly accepted as the basis for the formulation of qualifications and the learning outcomes of formal education. It has been reported that the implementation of the learning outcomes approach in VET has improved in a number of Member States (CEDEFOP 2012).

The inclusion of sport qualifications to be obtained in Higher Education in the National Qualification Framework will also follow normal procedures. However this could be slightly different for sport qualifications obtained through universities in the Czech Republic, England/Northern Ireland, France, Portugal and Italy, where the separated Higher Education qualification frameworks are followed. In several countries, cooperation between institutes of higher education and sport organisations is reported, but the role of sport organisations is not formalized by universities and sport federations not always recognise such studies in their license system. Conflicts about defining roles and competences of instructors, study materials and recognition of qualifications are barriers for further cooperation.

In a number of Member States the development of the National Qualification Framework is still on its way, each with its own national dynamics. And once there is an agreement on the general framework, a sectoral 'translation' and even more importantly, implementation in the education system is needed. It has been noticed in several reports that the process of inclusion of sport qualifications in the NQF is still not completed in various countries, and that so far the implementation on a concrete educational level, for example in the curriculum and assessments, is still lacking. A broad shift towards the implementation of the learning outcomes approach to a concrete educational level and a higher involvement of the labour market has not materialised yet in all Member States. However, the advantage for formal educational institutes is that supporting systems are in place to take the process forward.



3.3. Inclusion of sport qualifications obtained in education outside formal education institutes

The inclusion of sport qualifications obtained in the education system of national sport organisations in NQFs is more complex and may raise a lot of challenges. Although education systems in sport often follow the trends in formal education systems, the shift to inclusion in a NQF based on a learning outcomes approach is demanding, and advantages are not always clear in the short term.

First of all it seems that the education systems of the sport sector itself (and the specific regulations or legislation governing this education) are not always based on the learning outcomes approach used in the formal education system in the Member States. This makes it impossible to include them directly or indirectly in a National Qualification Framework with reference to EQF. Even more difficult is the situation where the same NQF terminology is used, references to certain EQF levels are suggested, but not based on for example the same level descriptors, but on the level or type of leagues (local, provincial, national, international).¹⁰ Thirdly it shows that there is a need for support in most (national) sport federations, because of a lack of specific expertise on the transformation of existing education programmes and the development of new education programs based on a learning outcomes approach.

The inventories show some progress, as 14 Member States¹¹ reported that some of the sport qualifications have been included in a qualification framework based on a learning outcomes approach that uses the same descriptors as the NQF. However, only a few Member States (United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Malta) reported a formal direct link to the already existing NQF, or indirectly through a national sport qualification framework, while others would like to develop this link in the future.

Ireland and Portugal reported that the sport qualifications were included in a qualification framework that doesn't use the same descriptors as the NQF and 7 Member States (Cyprus, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland and Slovakia) reported that such a qualification framework is not used so far and the inclusion of sport qualifications in such a future framework will take some time.

It was reported that mainly sport qualifications for coaches are increasingly included in qualification frameworks and that either these qualifications are (or will be) directly linked to the NQF, or are part of a separate sectoral sport qualification framework that has (will have) a direct link to the NQF.¹² For the other qualifications in the field of sport, e.g. for referees and officials, the link to a learning outcomes based qualification framework was often reported as non-existent, although it was mentioned that they were sometimes part of a sort of qualification framework on its own, even on the international level (CEDEFOP, international qualifications for top volleyball referees FIVB).

Further analysis is recommended to find out how the inclusion of sport qualifications is exactly materialized. So far 12 Member States¹³ reported that the learning outcomes approach was also introduced in the education systems themselves for example in the curriculum, assessment and validation systems and the validation mechanisms for recognition of non-formal and informal

¹⁰ However there are also good practices reported where the sport movement took the initiative to modernise its education system based on a learning outcomes system even before the process started in formal education

¹¹ AT, BE(FI), BE(Fr), DE, DK, EE, FI, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, RO, SI, UK

¹² It was not always clear how the link was defined as this could differ substantially for example by using the same level descriptors to formal recognition as part of the NQF.

¹³ BE(FI), BG, DE, EE, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PT and RO



learning experiences. Individual educational pathways based on such an approach were only reported by Belgium(FI), Estonia and Portugal.

The inventories gave the impression that all sort of initiatives are taking place, but that the transformation to a new qualification system in the sport sector is still in a conceptual stage in a number of Member States where there was no experience with the learning outcomes approach before. Only a limited number of Member States indicated that a transformation of sport legislation or funding conditions are foreseen..

The fact that countries, like the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, where there is no governmental role towards the sport education system of the sector, have started working on procedures for including non-formal and private sector qualifications and certificates in their NQF, or will do that in the near future, is promising, but no conclusions could be made on the possible inclusions of sport qualifications, as sometimes minimum standards are introduced for example on the duration of the education and training, which will exclude certain sport qualifications. Furthermore, quality assurance seems to be underdeveloped in formalized and non-formal sport education systems in most Member States. It is crucial for a full worthy inclusion of non-formal education qualifications within the sport sector in NQFs and formalised links to the formal education system and its qualifications, to elaborate a decent and proportional quality assurance system. It is clear that this will be a huge challenge, considering the complexity of this subject and the limited expertise within the sport sector. Although 19 Member States¹⁴ reported that education and training providers in the sport sector are formally recognised or accredited by the national, regional or local government or a combination of them, only 6 Member States reported that the government and governmental agencies are responsible for further quality assurance such as monitoring. Assessments auditing was only reported once. Only Estonia and the United Kingdom reported external organisations responsible for awarding qualifications, quality assurance training and the recognition of providers.

3.4. Inclusion of international sport qualifications obtained in education outside formal education institutes

In 18 Member States¹⁵ some national sport organisations or branch organisations organizing their education and training programme following the standards of coaching qualifications according to the international sport federation and the national qualification standards. It is a huge challenge for sport federations to match regulations and prescriptions coming from national governments with those from international sport federations of branch organisations. A process of double reference is needed which sometimes take time to overcome difference leading to an agreement. In for example Latvia and Slovakia people with an international qualification should qualify again for a national qualification, which give them the only permission to work in these countries.

Double referencing has been reported in 14 sports but is with the exception of football not widespread across Europe and it concerns different sports in the Member States involved. In fitness the qualification framework of EHFA functions not as an international qualification but as a reference point for the national level in a number of Member States.

In countries without a clear role of the government or governmental bodies towards the sport education system of the sector the international qualifications function on its own. It is not clear if these non-formal international qualifications could be part of the future inclusion process on national level.

There is a need to analyse further the character and typology of the international qualifications, their credibility and value on the labour market, both for individuals and employers.

¹⁴ AT, BE(FI), BE(Fr), BG, CZ, DE, EL, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, RO, SI and SK

¹⁵ AT, BE(FI),Be(Fr), CZ, EE, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK and UK



3.5. Findings and Conclusions

Work is in progress in many countries and there are certainly positive developments identified in formal, formalized and non-formal sport education systems.

The pace of the further inclusion of sport qualifications in NQF depends strongly on the present state of play of the education system of the sport sector in a Member State and the possible role of governments towards them.

First of all investment in the transformation of the non-formal education system towards a system based on modernised learning outcomes is needed. This system should be based on updated professional and occupational profiles and clear indicators should give guidance to the different learning outcome levels of qualifications, depending on the complexity of knowledge and skills and competence/responsibility levels taking in account the context.

Member States having a sport education system anchored in legislation on sport should take this opportunity to align their legislation with the NQF developments and legislation in their countries and implement the new learning outcomes approach in the sport education systems. They also should consider making the funding of the sport education system conditional based on direct or indirect link of the sport qualifications to NQF (as this was done with some success in the United Kingdom).

In Member States where the recognition of sport qualifications is the full responsibility of the sport sector itself, other mechanisms should be developed to convince and support the national (and international) sport movement to transform their educational providers and content in such a way that the qualifications are transparent, comparable with qualifications in formal education. The positive consequences of this choice (possible cooperation, quality assurance, relation with the labour market) should be pointed out. Developments in countries which have started working on procedures for including non-formal and private sector qualifications and certificates are hopeful. Several other countries have indicated that this opening up towards the non-formal sector will be addressed in a second stage of their framework developments.

Inclusion of the qualifications in one national qualification framework will enhance the cooperation between formal and non-formal education institutes. The inventory shows that a vast majority of Member States foresee a more formal relation between sectoral and formal education systems based on a common NQF by recognition of each other's qualifications, the curriculum and the sharing of assessments. It was pointed out that it could be a challenge to reach further cooperation. Good practice in Member States could function as inspiration for other organisations in other Member States. It has been indicated that it could be much more cost-effective for educational institutes, sport federations and branch organisations to formalize this cooperation.

Where inclusion of the sport qualifications could not fit directly or indirectly in a national qualification framework the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences could be an alternative. Through the recommendation of September 2012, the Commission is urging Member States to establish national systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning by 2015. This would allow citizens to obtain a full or partial qualification on the basis of skills and competences acquired and should include the experiences obtained in very short and specific sectoral sport education programmes.

Regarding international qualifications, sport should be included in the discussion taking place between Member States and European Commission. Developed international qualification



frameworks could function as a reference to national organisations such as developed in golf, outdoor sports and fitness. However they should respect the variation in the need for specific competences between countries and the specific environment and context in a certain country. Specific competences, going beyond the technical and tactical competences such as civic competences, could hardly be defined on an international level. At the same time the expertise on the technical and tactical knowledge and skill of the sport federations as ‘owner’ of the sport should be respected as well.



4. Recommendations for future actions

With respect for the progress made so far, experts representing Member States in the field of sport pointed out that the process of inclusion of sport qualifications in national qualification frameworks and the relation to international qualifications in the field of sport need further political attention on a EU level. Therefore the Expert group on Education and Training in Sport invite the Working Party Sport of the Council to propose the following future actions:

- Invite Ministers responsible for Sport to bring their sport legislation and regulations in line with national education regulations regarding qualification frameworks and the learning outcome approach and:
 - Support and invest, if applicable, in the transformation of the education system of the sport sector towards a system based on modernised learning outcomes, making use of the same qualification level descriptors as the National Qualification Framework with a reference to EQF.
 - Support, in close cooperation with the minister(s) responsible for education, the inclusion of sport qualifications obtained in the sectoral education system in sport (outside the formal education system) in the National Qualification Framework directly, or indirectly through a sectoral sport-specific qualification framework with a formalized link to the National Qualification Framework.
 - Promote the added value of the inclusion of sport qualifications in national qualification frameworks and the visibility of this process to volunteers and professionals working in the field of sport and the sport movement by showing progress made, good practices (individual pathways in education and training, recognised qualifications, mobility)
 - Based on the inclusion of all sport qualifications in a National Qualification Framework, promote and support the cooperation between the different sport education systems.
 - Support the development of a quality assurance system for the formalized and non-formal sport education systems which is proportional to the type of the education systems.
 - Promote the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning experiences in sport.
- Invite Ministers responsible for Education, in particular in Member States where non-formal sport education systems qualify people for functions in sport, to support the inclusion of these sport qualifications in the National Qualification Framework in close cooperation with the Ministers responsible for Sport.
- Call upon (regional) governments and the sport movement to promote a learning outcomes approach based on NQF/EQF principles in the non-governmental regulated sport education system for all sport qualifications.
- Recommend the European Commission to monitor the process of the further inclusion of sport qualifications in National qualification frameworks and to deliver a follow up report in 2017 in close cooperation with the Member States as part of the new EU Work Plan for Sport from 2014 onwards.
- Request the Commission to develop a support mechanism including a communication plan making the concrete added value of the transformations more visible, to implement the inclusion of sport qualifications in national qualification frameworks and the learning



outcomes approach in the education and training systems through peer meetings between Member States, seminars, notes, including reports, exchange of good practices and guidelines developed by experts in close cooperation with CEDEFOP. Experiences in the formal education structures with EQF advisory boards and supporting mechanisms have proved to work well and are appreciated by Member States. The inventory confirmed that Member States still in the process, would like to receive more support.

- Recommend the Commission to launch a study updating facts and figures about education systems for functions in the sportsector. Moreover, more transnational projects focussing on the implementation of sportqualifications and a learning outcomes approach in the formal sport education sector would be desirable trough the Erasmus for all programme, for example by the support of a European thematic network project as a follow up of the AEHESIS project for higher education, or through an integrated project for vocational education and training in sport updating results of several projects including VOCASPORT 2005.
- Intensify and coordinate contacts with the international federations and other international sport organisations and stakeholders involved on the inclusion of international sport qualifications in National Qualification Frameworks (e.g. organise a conference with them to clarify the latest developments on NQF/EQF). Find out whether a future arrangement is possible (based on the learning outcomes approach and a quality assurance system, taking into account the diversity in national education systems) in which the position of international sport qualifications could be more easily accepted on national and European level, taking in account the developments regarding the position of international qualifications in general towards NQF and EQF.



ANNEX I

Glossary¹⁶

access to education and training

Conditions, circumstances or requirements (qualification, education level, competences or work experience, etc.) governing admission to and participation in educational institutions or programs.

Comment: access of vulnerable groups to education is conditioned by outreach activities, availability of information, motivation, vocational preparation and guidance, financial support and targeted VET offer.

Source: based on Unesco, 1995.

accreditation (quality) Formal recognition that a body or a person is competent to carry out specific tasks.

Source: ISO – Glossary.

Accreditation of an education or training provider

Process of quality assurance through which accredited status is granted to an education or training provider, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c, based on Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, 2003.

apprenticeship

Systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.

Comment:

- in French, the term 'apprentissage' relates to both apprenticeship and the process of learning (see 'learning');
- the German 'dual system' is an example of apprenticeship.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

assessment of learning outcomes

Process of appraising knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria (learning expectations, measurement of learning outcomes). Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification.

Comment: In the literature, 'assessment' generally refers to appraisal of individuals whereas 'evaluation' is more frequently used to describe appraisal of education and training methods or providers.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

awarding body

Body issuing qualifications (certificates, diplomas or titles) formally recognising the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) of an individual, following an assessment and validation procedure.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

¹⁶ Based on Glossary 'Quality in education and training' (CEDEFOP 2011)

**certification of learning outcomes**

Process of issuing a certificate, diploma or title formally attesting that a set of learning outcomes (knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual have been assessed and validated by a competent body against a predefined standard.

Comment: certification may validate the outcome of learning acquired in formal, non-formal or informal settings.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

certification (quality) Process by which a third party gives written assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements.

Source: ISO.

certification body

Body that gives written assurance that a (quality) product, process or service conforms to specified requirements following assessment against predefined criteria.

Source: ISO.

common principles for quality assurance in higher education and VET

Quality assurance – to ensure accountability and improvement of higher education and vocational education and training – should be carried out in accordance with the following nine principles:

- quality assurance policies and procedures should underpin all levels of the European qualifications framework;
- quality assurance should be an integral part of internal management of education and training institutions;
- quality assurance should include regular evaluation of institutions, their programmes or their quality assurance systems by external monitoring bodies or agencies;
- external monitoring bodies or agencies carrying out quality assurance should be subject to regular review;
- quality assurance should include context, input, process and output dimensions, while giving emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes;
- quality assurance systems should include the following elements:
 - clear and measurable objectives and standards, guidelines for implementation, including stakeholder involvement,
 - appropriate resources,
 - consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review,
 - feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement,
 - widely accessible evaluation results;
- quality assurance initiatives at international, national and regional levels should be coordinated to ensure overview, coherence, synergy and system-wide analysis;
- quality assurance should be a cooperative process across education and training levels and systems, involving all relevant stakeholders, in Member States and across the Community;
- quality assurance orientations at Community level may provide reference points for evaluations and peer learning.

Source: European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2008.

competence

Proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

Source: European Commission, 2006a.

or

Ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development).



Comment: competence is not limited to cognitive elements (involving use of theory, concepts or tacit knowledge); it also encompasses functional aspects (involving technical skills) as well as interpersonal attributes (e.g. social or organisational skills) and ethical values.

Source: Cedefop, Tissot, 2004; European Commission, 2006a.

continuing education and training

Education or training after initial education and training – or after entry into working life aimed at helping individuals to:

- improve or update their knowledge and/or skills;
- acquire new skills for a career move or retraining;
- continue their personal or professional development.

Comment: continuing education and training is part of lifelong learning and may encompass any kind of education (general, specialised or vocational, formal or non-formal, etc.). It is crucial for the employability of individuals.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

education or training provider

Any organisation or individual providing education or training services.

Comments:

- education and training providers may be organisations specifically set up for this purpose, or they may be others, such as employers, who provide training as part of their business activities. Training providers also include independent individuals who offer services;
- certification of providers is a key element of quality in education and training.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

Europass

A framework of five documents helping citizens better communicate their skills and competences to move to work or study in Europe. The Europass CV and the Europass language passport are completed by citizens themselves; the three other documents can be issued to citizens who experience mobility (Europass mobility) or formal vocational education or training (Europass certificate supplement) or higher education (diploma supplement).

Comment: Europass promotes adequate appreciation of learning outcomes acquired in formal, non-formal or informal settings.

Source: Cedefop.

European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET)

Technical framework for transfer, recognition and, where appropriate, accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes to achieve a qualification. ECVET tools and methodology comprise the description of qualifications in units of learning outcomes with associated points, a transfer and accumulation process and complementary documents such as learning agreements, transcripts of records and ECVET users' guides.

Source: European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2009.

or

Device in which qualifications are expressed in units of learning outcomes to which credit points are attached, and which is combined with a procedure for validating learning outcomes. The aim of this system is to promote:

- mobility of people undertaking training;
- accumulation, transfer, validation and recognition of learning outcomes (either formal, non-formal or informal) acquired in different countries;
- implementation of lifelong learning;
- transparency of qualifications;
- common trust and cooperation between vocational training and education providers in Europe.



Comment: ECVET is based on describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences), organised into transferable and accumulable learning units to which credit points are attached and registered in a personal transcript of learning outcomes.

Source: European Commission, 2006b.

European qualification framework for lifelong learning (EQF)

Reference tool for describing and comparing qualification levels in qualifications systems developed at national, international or sectoral levels.

Comment: the EQF's main components are a set of eight reference levels described in terms of learning outcomes (combination of knowledge, skills and/or competences) and mechanisms and principles for voluntary cooperation. The eight levels cover the entire span of qualifications from those recognising basic knowledge, skills and competences to those awarded at the highest level of academic and professional and vocational education and training. EQF is a translation device for qualification systems.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c, based on European Commission, 2006a.

or

Reference tool to compare the qualification levels of different qualifications systems and promote both lifelong learning and equal opportunities in a knowledge-based society, as well as further integration of the European labour market, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems.

Source: European Commission, 2008b

European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET)

New reference framework to help EU Member States and participating countries develop, improve, guide and assess the quality of their own vocational education and training systems.

formal education and training for functions and professions in sport (in this report)

Education that occurs in an educational institute recognised and regulated by the Ministry of (Higher) Education preparing students for a sport qualification related to functions or professions in the sector of sport.

formalized education and training for functions and professions in sport (in this report)

Education regulated by the Ministry responsible for sport, provided by recognised educational institutes or organisations, preparing students for a function or profession in sport.

formal learning

Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

informal learning

Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Comments:

- informal learning outcomes do not usually lead to certification but may be validated and certified in the framework of recognition of prior learning schemes;
- informal learning is also referred to as experiential or incidental/random learning.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

**key skills / key competences**

Sum of skills (basic and new basic skills) needed to live in a contemporary knowledge society.

Comment: in their recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, the European Parliament and the Council set out eight key competences:

- communication in mother tongue;
- communication in foreign languages;
- competences in maths, science and technology;
- digital competence;
- learning to learn;
- interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, and civic competence;
- entrepreneurship;
- cultural expression.

Source: Cedefop, Tissot, 2008c; European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006.

knowledge

Outcome of assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a field of study or work.

learning outcome(s) / learning attainments

Set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal or informal.

Source: Cedefop 2008c.

or

Statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

Source: European Commission, 2008b.

level of qualification

The term covers two aspects:

a) the level of attainment in education and training recognised in a qualification system or in a qualification framework;

or

b) the learning outcomes acquired through education and training, work experience or in informal/ non-formal settings.

Comment: the level of qualification:

- is often determined against a standard in a qualification system or against a level descriptor in a qualification framework;
- can be determined against an occupational profile (for example, description of learning outcomes required to perform the tasks attached to a job at a specific level of responsibility and autonomy);
- may also refer to education and training attended but not validated and certified.

Source: Cedefop.

non-formal education and training for sport functions and professions in sport (in this report)

Education not regulated by a governmental body, provided by a private or public educational provider or sport (branch) organisation preparing students for a function or profession in sport.

non-formal learning

Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

*Comments:*

- non-formal learning outcomes may be validated and lead to certification;
- non-formal learning is sometimes described as semi-structured learning.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

open method of coordination

New framework for cooperation between Member States, whose national policies can thus be directed towards certain common objectives.

Comments:

- the open method of coordination (OMC), is an intergovernmental method, in which Member States are evaluated by one another, with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance.
- the open method of coordination takes place in areas which fall within the competence of Member States, such as employment, social protection, social inclusion, education, sport, youth and training; it is based principally on:
 - jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved (adopted by the Council);
 - jointly established measuring instruments (statistics, indicators, guidelines);
 - benchmarking, comparison of Member States' performance and exchange of best practices (monitored by the Commission).

Source: European Commission. Europa glossary.

outcome (quality)

Positive or negative longer-term socioeconomic change or impact that occurs directly or indirectly from an intervention's input, activities and output.

Source: based on Johnson Center for Philanthropy; Cedefop, Descy and Tessaring, 2005.

output (quality)

Immediate and direct tangible result of an intervention.

Source: Cedefop, Descy and Tessaring, 2005.

qualification

Qualification covers different aspects:

(a) formal qualification: the formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work. A qualification confers official recognition of the value of learning

outcomes in the labour market and in education and training. A qualification can be a legal entitlement to practice a trade (OECD);

(b) job requirements: knowledge, aptitudes and skills required to perform specific tasks attached to a particular work position (ILO).

Sources: Cedefop, 2008c; based on Eurydice, 2006; European Commission, 2008; ETF, 1997; OECD, 2007; ILO, 1998.

qualification framework

Instrument for development and classification of qualifications (at national or sectoral levels) according to a set of criteria (such as using descriptors) applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes.

Comment: A qualification framework can be used to:

- establish national standards of knowledge, skills and competences;
- promote quality of education;
- provide a system of coordination and/or integration of qualifications and enable comparison of qualifications by relating qualifications to one another;
- promote access to learning, transfer of learning outcomes and progression in learning.



Source: based on European Commission, 2008; OECD, 2007.

quality assurance in education and training

Activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement, implemented to ensure that education and training (content of programmes, curricula, assessment and validation of learning outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders.

Comments:

- QA contributes to better matching of education and training supply and demand;
- QA covers the macro-level (educational system level), meso-level (level of individual educational institutions) and micro-level (level of teaching-learning processes).

Source: Cedefop.

quality audit

Systematic and independent examination to determine whether quality activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve quality objectives.

Source: ISO, 1994.

quality indicator for assessing quality in VET

10 quality indicators which can be used to support evaluation and quality improvement of VET systems and/or VET providers are:

- relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers;
- investment in training of teachers and trainers;
- participation rate in VET programmes;
- completion rate in VET programmes;
- placement rate in VET programmes;
- utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace;
- unemployment rate according to individual criteria;
- prevalence of vulnerable groups;
- mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market;
- schemes used to promote better access to VET.

Source: European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2009).

recognition of learning outcomes

(a) Formal recognition: process of granting official status to skills and competences either through:

- award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles); or
- grant of equivalence, credit units or waivers, validation of gained skills and/or competences.

and/or

(b) social recognition: acknowledgement of the value of skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

skill

Ability to perform tasks and solve problems.

Sources: Cedefop, 2008c; European Commission, 2008.

social dialogue

Process of exchange between social partners to promote consultation, dialogue and collective bargaining.

Comments:



- (a) social dialogue can be bipartite (involving representatives of workers and employers) or tripartite (also associating public authorities and/or representatives of civil society, NGOs, etc.);
- (b) social dialogue can take place at various levels (company, sectoral/cross-sectoral and local/regional/national/transnational);
- (c) at international level, social dialogue can be bilateral, trilateral or multilateral, according to the number of countries involved.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

validation of learning outcomes

Confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.



ANNEX II