



FINNISH NATIONAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION

QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS (QFs) AND RECOGNITION

Subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)

Dr. Carita Blomqvist, Head of Unit

Recognition and International Comparability of Qualifications

Finnish National Board of Education



Main principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997)

- **Access qualifications, periods of study and final qualifications issued in signatory states**
- **Applicants entitled to fair assessment of their qualifications within reasonable time limit**
- **Transparent, coherent, reliable procedures and criteria used in the assessment**
- **Recognize unless substantial differences**
- **Possibility to appeal**
- **Burden of proof upon the host country/body making recognition decisions**



Subsidiary texts

- **Recommendation on International Access Qualifications 1999**
- **Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (2001, update in 2010)**
- **Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001, update 2007)**
- **Recognition of Joint Degrees 2004**
- **Recognition and Qualifications Frameworks 2013**



Why subsidiary text on recognition and qualifications frameworks?

- **Developments on national and European level: European and National QF, learning outcomes, life-long learning, recognition of prior learning**
- **Self-certification and referencing processes**
- **More stakeholder involvement and co-operation between national and European stakeholders is needed (role of ENIC/NARIC offices); consultation/testing and implementation phases**



Why subsidiary text on recognition and qualifications frameworks?

- **To benefit individual learners:**
Both QFs and recognition are supposed to help individuals understand qualifications and move within and between systems
- **Link to quality assurance: several dimensions**
- **Bologna Process: EHEA working group on structural reform**
- **Co-operation with the EQF Advisory Group**



Recommendation on the use of qualifications frameworks in the recognition of foreign qualifications/structure

- **Preamble**
- **Definitions: reference to the Lisbon Recognition Convention; National Qualifications Frameworks, Overarching frameworks and qualifications frameworks**
- **Scope and general considerations**
- **Recommendations**

Explanatory memorandum



The use of Qualifications Frameworks in the recognition process/Scope and general considerations

- **Focus on the use of QFs as important information and transparency tool**
- **Recommendation demonstrates ways in which QFs may be helpful in establishing similarities and whether or not there are substantial differences between qualifications**
- **The fact that not all countries have NQFs should not be an impediment to recognizing qualifications from such countries**



The use of Qualifications Frameworks in the recognition process/Scope and general considerations

- **NQFs facilitate recognition especially when they have been linked in a transparent and comparative way – through self-certification and referencing – to the QF-EHEA/EQF-LLL**
- **While the existence of a NQF alone does not lead to “automatic recognition”, the positioning of qualifications within the NQF of the awarding country and their relation to one or more overarching frameworks gives important information to facilitate the recognition processes.**



The use of Qualifications Frameworks in the recognition process/Recommendations

- **The competent recognition authorities and the ENIC Network should develop a common understanding on how to use national, European and other overarching QFs for facilitating fair recognition**
- **QFs should be used while considering the key elements in recognition: level, learning outcomes, quality, workload and profile**
- **QFs provide limited information to support recognition when it comes to the profile of a qualification**



The use of Qualifications Frameworks in the recognition process/Level

- **If a NQF has been self-certified/referenced, there is, as a general rule, no need for the recognition authority to investigate the level of qualifications further**
- **In the case that qualifications have been referenced/self-certified towards the same level in overarching frameworks, they should be seen as broadly compatible**
- **When level discrepancies occur, qualification specific information should be used. In these cases, the formal rights the qualification in the awarding country should be taken into account.**



The use of Qualifications Frameworks in the recognition process/Learning outcomes

- **The learning outcomes of NQFs and of overarching QFs are generic and provide a reference point for recognition**
- **In cases where the learning outcomes provided by the QFs are insufficient for recognition purposes, the more detailed descriptions of learning outcomes provided by institutions should be used. The description of learning outcomes in the Diploma Supplement or other documents is useful for recognition purposes.**



The use of Qualifications Frameworks in the recognition process/Quality

- **A transparent link between recognition, qualifications frameworks and quality assurance should be established**
- **If a NQF has been self-certified or referenced, there is an assumption that the individual qualifications included in the framework by the competent authority are quality assured. Therefore as a general rule there is no need for the recognition authority to investigate the quality of the qualification.**



The use of Qualifications Frameworks in the recognition process/Workload

- **While recognizing that qualifications should as far as possible be assessed on the basis of learning outcomes, competent recognition authorities may also be guided in their assessment by the workload learners are assumed to require in order to obtain the given qualification. This is normally expressed as credits and indicates the typical workload expected to achieve the learning outcomes associated with a qualification.**



Concluding remarks

Qualifications frameworks:

- **will not guarantee automatic recognition, but facilitate recognition by:**
- **improving transparency**
- **increasing information especially concerning the level and learning outcomes**
- **helping to make judgments more accurate**
- **helping to see similarities**