



DGIV/EDU/HE (2010) 19
Orig. Eng.
Strasbourg, 22 October 2010

BOLOGNA PROCESS
Coordination Group for Qualifications Framework

Third report on the development of national QFs Autumn 2010

Directorate General IV: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (Directorate of School,
Out-of-School and Higher Education – Higher Education and Research Division)

Distribution: BFUG
Working Group
National correspondents

ITEM 5

The third report is based on the answers received in September and October 2010, as presented in Appendix 1. Several points should be directly mentioned:

- The number of answers is significantly lower than the two first consultations;
- It was more difficult to obtain the answers; the last one, after two relaunches, was received in mid-October.

From the answers as well as contacts taken, some hypotheses can be formulated:

- The QF development is perceived as part of the “Bologna package” and in some countries there seem to be a certain fatigue towards reforms.
- In this framework, even for those dealing directly with QFs, it seems that it is not so easy to perceive all elements of this development (for instance: change of paradigms in terms of learning outcomes, role of HEIs)
- The political situation of the country seems to play a role in the development of its QF: a new Minister does not necessarily follow up the work done by his/her predecessor. This can lead to discontinuity in the decision-making process.
- The acceptance of the QF by the labour market, its capacity to be a useful tool for the market itself is questioned.
- The international dimension is an important factor which supports the process and the link with the recognition issue is made by several countries. The idea is that if QFs are developed, it could be easier to promote the mobility of students and recognition of qualifications

In terms of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, the following elements are mentioned for each point. Clearly, depending of the national situation, some elements can appear in different places. Please note that if the sentence is between “ ”, it means that it is a direct quote from one of the answers

Strengths:

- The involvement of the different stakeholders is a crucial element for the success of the process, including the ENIC NARIC centre.
- The fact that learning outcomes is a concept already used by HEIs facilitates the development of QFs
- A clear understanding of the terminology used is important as a starting point. And for the whole process
- Within the QF-EHEA, the use of vocabulary and concepts (such as “knowledge”, “skills”, “competences”) similar to the EQF LLL makes the linking between the HE and the other levels easier.
- The support of international organizations, the sharing of experiences at international level, the contribution of international experts are important factors to strengthen the development of QF
- A clear legal basis as well as a clear political commitment are facilitators of the process.
- The development, from the beginning, of a web site of high quality is an interesting tool for the development of QF

Weaknesses:

- Political changes create discontinuity in the decision making regarding QF development
- The business sector is not always involved in the process and it is not necessarily convinced of the relevance of the process. Employers do not always recognize the qualification framework and often seem to prefer to use the old system criteria and descriptors
- For small countries, the development of QF clearly depends on the dialogue with neighbouring countries.
- Development of QF is perceived as part of the Bologna reforms without a clear understanding of the advantages of its development. The Bologna Process is insufficiently known and understood by the different stakeholders and therefore they do not understand the importance of developing a national QF
- At national level, the number of experts in this field is often insufficient: it is difficult to identify people with the competences needed to support the development
- The challenge of terminology still exists for some countries and the methodology for the development of QF is not always coherent
- The lack of financial resources and of a legal basis are weaknesses of the whole process
- “The balance in an overarching framework between being overarching and general and subject/concrete is difficult”.
- “The vagueness of the generic framework and the Dublin descriptors is criticized”
- Some countries find it difficult to integrate the approaches to deal with the 2 overarching frameworks
- The perception of the process by HEIs is not always positive and they can have the feeling that they lose some of their traditional strengths without seeing clearly what they gain instead. The QF development should not be perceived only in terms of employability but rather should be developed taking into account all missions of higher education. This can translate as resistance by the “old” universities.
- The comparability of “old” and “new” diplomas within the QF is not easy
- Insufficient international cooperation and support

Opportunities

- The development of QFs could contribute to defining policies for the development of HE strategies. Strong involvement of HEIs is a very important element in this framework
- The development of QFs is a tool for better transparency of the whole HE system and is linked to reflection on quality assurance
- The support of students for the whole process, especially in terms of consequences of QF development for mobility, is an important factor.
- The recognition of prior learning and of lifelong learning is perceived as good opportunities by students
- International support and cooperation are important, including the work done by the European institutions, as well as their support, including financial support

- Regional cooperation is very important (for instance South East Europe network or for “small” countries which obligatory need to have strong dialog with neighbouring countries)
- The increased involvement of stakeholders is an added value
- The development of QFs will reinforce the employability of graduates as the employers will have a better understanding of their generic competences

Threats:

- Politicians do not endorse the reforms and society can be tired of constant reforms. The support for education and research can be reduced due to the economical crisis;
- The labour market does not sufficiently recognize the QF and its importance. The dialogue with business sector is not easy
- Different stakeholders can have different and contradictory views on QF
- The process is not always easy to coordinate
- The two overarching frameworks, with their different descriptors, make the process more difficult and less transparent
- Some HEIs resist the change of paradigms and refuse some of the principles of the process (as description in terms of learning outcomes, student centered approach) This point is mentioned by 5 countries.
- The development of the process can imply a certain bureaucratization
- The lack of financial support makes the process more difficult

It should be also be underlined that the self certification processes for the different countries need to be coordinated and it will be important to have enough experts to be able to deal with the certifications processes if too many are carried out at the same time. This may be a real issue as we approach the deadline for self certification (and referencing towards the EQF, where very many countries have indicated an intention to reference in the course of 2011).

Appendix 1: State of answers for the three consultations

Country	First consultation Winter 2008	Second consultation Winter 2009 beginning 2010	Third consultation Autumn 2010	NOTE
ALBANIA	X	X		
ANDORRA	X	X	X	
ARMENIA		X		
AUSTRIA	X	X		
AZERBAIJAN				HAS NOT ANSWERED ANY OF THE CONSULTATIONS
BELGIUM (FLEMISH COMMUNITY)	X	X		SELF CERTIFIED
BELGIUM (FRENCH COMMUNITY)	X	X		
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	X	X	X	
BULGARIA	X		X	
CROATIA	X	X	X	
CYPRUS	X			
CZECH REPUBLIC	X	X		
DENMARK	X	X	X	SAME ANSWER FOR THE SECOND AND THE THIRD CONSULTATION SELF CERTIFIED
ESTONIA	X	X	X	
FINLAND		X	X	
FRANCE	X	X	X	
GEORGIA	X	X	X	SAME ANSWER FOR THE SECOND AND THE THIRD CONSULTATION
GERMANY		X	X	SAME ANSWER FOR THE SECOND AND THE THIRD CONSULTATION SELF CERTIFIED
GREECE			X	
HOLY SEE	X	X	X	
HUNGARY		X	X	
ICELAND	X	X		
IRELAND	X	X	X	SAME ANSWER FOR THE SECOND AND THE THIRD CONSULTATION SELF CERTIFIED
ITALY	X	X		
LATVIA	X	X	X	
LIECHTENSTEIN	X	X	X	
LITHUANIA	X			

LUXEMBOURG		X	X	
MALTA	x	X		SELF CERTIFIED
MOLDOVA		X	X	
MONTENEGRO	x	X		
NETHERLANDS	x	X		SELF CERTIFIED
NORWAY	x	X	X	
POLAND	x	X	X	
PORTUGAL				HAS NOT ANSWERED ANY OF THE CONSULTATIONS
ROMANIA	x	X	X	
RUSSIAN FEDERATION		X	X	
SERBIA		X		
SLOVAK REPUBLIC		X	X	
SLOVENIA	x	X	X	
SPAIN	x			
SWEDEN	x	X	X	
SWITZERLAND	x	X	X	
“THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA”	x			
TURKEY	x	X	X	
UKRAINE	x	X		
UNITED KINGDOM (EWNI)	x	X		SELF CERTIFIED
UNITED KINGDOM/ SCOTLAND	x	X		SELF CERTIFIED
TOTAL ANSWERS	36	40	27	

NB: in bold, the names of the countries which have never answered

Appendix two: situation regarding the relation between QF EHEA and EQF LLL

Country	Joint Process or processes in dialogue	Separate processes	Not indicated or no information	NOTE NB self certification refers to the QF-EHEA; referencing to the EQF
ALBANIA			X	NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
ANDORRA	X			NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
ARMENIA				NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
AUSTRIA			X	
AZERBAIJAN			X	NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
BELGIUM (FLEMISH COMMUNITY)		(X)		HE QF SELF CERTIFIED IN 2009
BELGIUM (FRENCH COMMUNITY)			X	
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA		X		NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
BULGARIA	X			
CROATIA	X			A JOINT SELF CERTIFICATION/REFERENCING PROCESS ABOUT TO BE LAUNCHED
CYPRUS			X	
CZECH REPUBLIC			X	
DENMARK		X		HE QF SELF CERTIFIED IN 2009
ESTONIA			X	
FINLAND		X		REFERENCING PROCESS UNDER WAY
FRANCE		(X)		A PRELIMINARY REFERENCING REPORT SUBMITTED OCT 2009
GEORGIA	X			NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
GERMANY		X		HE QF SELF CERTIFIED IN 2008
GREECE			X	
HOLY SEE		X		NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
HUNGARY			X	
ICELAND			X	
IRELAND	X			SELF CERTIFIED 2006; REFERENCED 2008
ITALY			X	
LATVIA		X		
LIECHTENSTEIN		X		
LITHUANIA			X	
LUXEMBOURG			X	
MALTA	X			JOINT SELF CERTIFICATION/REFERENCING REPORT SUBMITTED 2009
MOLDOVA	X			NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
MONTENEGRO				NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
NETHERLANDS		(X)		SELF CERTIFIED 2009
NORWAY	X			

POLAND		X		
PORTUGAL			X	REFERENCING PROCESS UNDER WAY
ROMANIA	X			
RUSSIAN FEDERATION		X		NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
SERBIA			X	NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	X			
SLOVENIA		X		
SPAIN			X	
SWEDEN	X			
SWITZERLAND		X		NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
“THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA”			X	NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
TURKEY	X			
UKRAINE			X	NOT A PARTY TO THE EQF
UNITED KINGDOM ENGLAND, WALES, NORTHERN IRELAND	X			HE QF SELF CERTIFIED IN 2009; REFERENCING REPORT SUBMITTED 2009 FOR ALL PARTS OF THE UK
UNITED KINGDOM SCOTLAND	X			HE QF SELF CERTIFIED IN 2006; REFERENCING REPORT SUBMITTED 2009 FOR ALL PARTS OF THE UK