

Council of Europe

# Forum on Qualifications Frameworks Background Report

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**REPORT BASED ON THE ANALYSIS  
OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY 2007  
STOCKTAKING SUBMISSIONS ON  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS  
FRAMEWORKS**



**6,500  
WORDS LONG!**



**"You're not allowed to use  
the sprinkler system to keep  
your audience awake."**

# **THE ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY 2007 STOCKTAKING SUBMISSIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS**

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# 1. Introduction

- The creation of 'new style' national qualifications frameworks (NQF) was never going to be easy - acknowledged in the 2007 London Communiqué
- NQF are just a part of any educational reform process + must not be seen as isolated from other educational innovations
- The commitment to elaborating NQF by 2010 is very optimistic (creation = possible, implementation = long-term)
- The Stocktaking report notes: '*...there may be confusion and even resistance..*' (this is understandable)
- This report commissioned by the Council of Europe is designed to support, provide guidance and highlight issues

## 2. Progress - nature and trends

**TABLE 1: IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS**

<b>Dark Green (7)</b>	<b><u>Seven</u> countries have a national QF in line with the overarching QF for EHEA in place</b>
<b>Light Green (6)</b>	<b><u>Six</u> countries have a proposal for a NQF in line with the overarching QF for the EHEA which has been discussed with all relevant stakeholders at the national level and a timetable for implementation has been agreed</b>
<b>Yellow (11)</b>	<b><u>Eleven</u> countries have a proposal for a national QF prepared in line with the overarching QF for the EHEA</b>
<b>Orange (23)</b>	<b><u>Twenty three</u> countries have begun a development process, including all the relevant national stakeholders, leading to definition of national QF in line with the overarching QF for EHEA</b>
<b>Red (1)</b>	<b>In <u>one</u> country work has not started at establishing national QF in line with the overarching QF for EHEA</b>

**TABLE 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS**

Table based on information provided in the national stocktaking reports 2007 of multi-part answers to question 10.

NOTE: a blank space indicates no information or no suitable information provided.

COUNTRY	THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOUR NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IS IN LINE WITH THE FRAMEWORK FOR QUALIFICATIONS OF THE EHEA	THE STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK					THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
		Legislation in place	Stakeholder agreement finalised	Working group established	Outcomes based qualifications descriptors	Implementation timetable agreed	
Albania	Orange			✓		✓	Being consulted
Andorra	Orange						Being consulted
Armenia	Orange			✓		✓	Being consulted
Austria	Orange			✓		✓	Being consulted
Azerbaijan	Red						
Belgium FL	Light Green			✓	✓	✓	Being consulted
Belgium FR	Orange			✓	✓ (in part)	Not agreed	
BiH	Yellow		✓ (in process)	✓	✓		Being consulted
Bulgaria	Light Green	✓ (in part)			✓	✓	Consulted + ongoing
Croatia	Yellow		✓	✓	✓ (in preparation)	✓	Consulted
Cyprus	Orange			✓			Being consulted
Czech Rep	Yellow	✓ (in part)		✓		✓	Being consulted
Denmark	Dark Green	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consulted
Estonia	Orange			✓		✓	Being consulted
Finland	Yellow		✓	✓	✓	Not decided	Consulted
France	Orange	✓ (in part)					
Georgia	Orange						Being consulted
Germany	Dark Green	✓ (Länder)	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consulted
Greece	Orange			✓			Being consulted
Holy See	Orange			✓		✓	Being consulted
Hungary	Light Green			✓	✓	✓	Consulted
Iceland	Dark Green	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consulted
Ireland	Dark Green	✓ (self-certif..)	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consulted

TABLE 2 (continued)  COUNTRY	THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOUR NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IS IN LINE WITH THE FRAMEWORK FOR QUALIFICATIONS OF THE EHEA	THE STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK					THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
		Legislation in place	Stakeholder agreement finalised	Working group established	Outcomes based qualifications descriptors	Implementation timetable agreed	
Italy	Yellow	✓ (in part)		✓	✓	unclear	Consulted
Latvia	Yellow	✓ (drafted)		✓	✓ (in part)	✓	Consulted + ongoing
Liechtenstein	Orange			✓	✓ (in preparation)	✓	
Lithuania	Orange			✓	(under debate)	✓	Being consulted
Luxembourg	Orange			✓		✓ (temp halted)	
Malta	Light Green	✓ (in part)		✓	✓ (vocational)	✓	Consulted + ongoing
Moldova	Orange			✓	✓ (in preparation)	✓	To be consulted
Montenegro	Orange			✓			To be conducted
Netherlands	Yellow	NQF drafted		✓	✓		Being consulted
Norway	Yellow	✓ (enabling)		✓	✓ (ongoing)	✓	Consulted + ongoing
Poland	Orange			✓		✓	To be consulted
Portugal	Dark Green	✓	No details	✓	✓	✓	
Romania	Light Green	✓ (enabling)		✓		✓ (under dev)	To be consulted
Russia	Yellow			✓	✓ (prof ed. only)	✓	Only employer Asso..
Serbia	Yellow			✓		✓	
Slovakia	Orange			✓			
Slovenia	Orange			✓			
Spain	Orange			✓			All to be consulted
Sweden	Light Green	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	All consulted
Switzerland	Orange			✓		✓	To be consulted
'The Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia'	Orange			✓	(under debate)	✓	
Turkey	Yellow			✓	(to be applied)	✓	To be consulted
Ukraine	Orange			✓		✓	Unclear all consulted
UK-England, Wales and N. Ireland (EWNl)	Dark Green	Not applicable	✓	✓	✓	✓	All consulted
UK-Scotland	Dark Green	Not applicable	✓	✓	✓	✓ (self-cert done)	All consulted



## 2. Progress - nature and trends

- **Considerable progress – 13 of 48 countries gained a 'green' rating**
- **The majority of the most advanced began work on NQF some time ago + are North West European + score highly on all Stocktaking categories!**
- **There are potential dangers if NQF are hurriedly created**
- **The national Stocktaking submissions on qualifications framework questions varied considerably in detail, length and clarity (some betray confusion)**
- **It is possible to make the following points:**

## OBSERVATIONS:

- 29% countries indicated they had NQF legislation and enabling legislation in place or partly in place.
- 19% countries reported they had finalised stakeholder agreement.
- 94% countries definitively indicated they had established NQF working groups.
- 31% of countries indicated they had 'outcomes based qualifications descriptors' and a further 23% had them in preparation or partly in place. However, the understanding of national qualifications descriptors is not clear.
- 64% countries indicated they had an implementation timetable agreed but it is not often clear what they understood by implementation.
- 25% countries indicated that stakeholders were 'being consulted' and in 27% countries indicated they 'had been consulted'. The level and nature of consultation appears to vary.

### **3. The development of national qualifications frameworks - main concerns and problems**

- 3.1 Multi-speed progress**
- 3.2 Relationship between the meta-frameworks and NQF**
- 3.3 Timescale**
- 3.4 Framework confusions**
- 3.5 Creation v implementation**
- 3.6 Quality assurance and qualifications frameworks**
- 3.7 Support**

## 4. Credits and qualifications frameworks

**TABLE 3: STAGE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ECTS**

<b>Dark Green</b> (27)	<u>Twenty-seven</u> countries in 2007 - ECTS credits are allocated in all first and second cycle programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation.
<b>Light Green</b> (9)	<u>Nine countries</u> in 2007 - credits are allocated in at least 75 per cent of the first and second cycle Higher Education programmes, using ECTS OR a fully compatible credit system enabling credit transfer and accumulation
<b>Yellow</b> (6)	<u>Six countries</u> in 2007- credits are allocated in 50-74 per cent of Higher Education programmes, using ECTS or a fully compatible national credit system enabling credit transfer and accumulation
<b>Orange</b> (6)	<u>Six countries</u> in 2007 - ECTS credits are allocated in less than 50 per cent of Higher Education programmes .....OR A national credit system is used which is not fully compatible with ECTS .....OR ECTS is used in all programmes but only for credit transfer
<b>Red</b> (0)	<u>Zero countries</u> – had no credit system in place yet

## OBSERVATIONS:

- The role of credits and their relationship to qualifications frameworks is an area of concern and potential confusion + slow progress
- The EUA '*Trends V*' and EISB '*BTSE*' reports indicate problems with ECTS (theory v practice)
- ECTS issues include:
  - Definition of credit + links to learning outcomes + workload
  - Relationship between ECTS and ECVET
  - Distinctions between credit accumulation and transfer modes
  - Role as a meta-framework and relationship to national/local credit systems
- Credits have a complex and significant role in facilitating recognition, flexible learning pathways, curriculum reform, mobility lifelong learning , etc.

## 5. Issues for consideration

- Full implementation of 'new style' qualifications frameworks will take us beyond 2010
- This process understandably is attended by natural 'birth pains'
- There has been remarkable progress in developing NQF and much good practice is becoming available e.g. 2007 BFUG Working group report

There are a number of questions that countries might find it useful to consider when conceiving, creating, implementing and self-certificating their NQF:

- 5.1 Stakeholder consultation  
**[three questions]**
- 5.2 Initial creation of the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)  
**[Seventeen questions]**
- 5.3 Implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks  
**[Eleven questions]**

**FINISHED!**

