



Education and Culture



Education
and
Training

**National Qualifications Frameworks in an
international perspective**
**International seminar on the occasion of the
launch of the Flemish Qualifications Framework**
Brussels, 30 November 2009



The European qualifications framework for lifelong learning

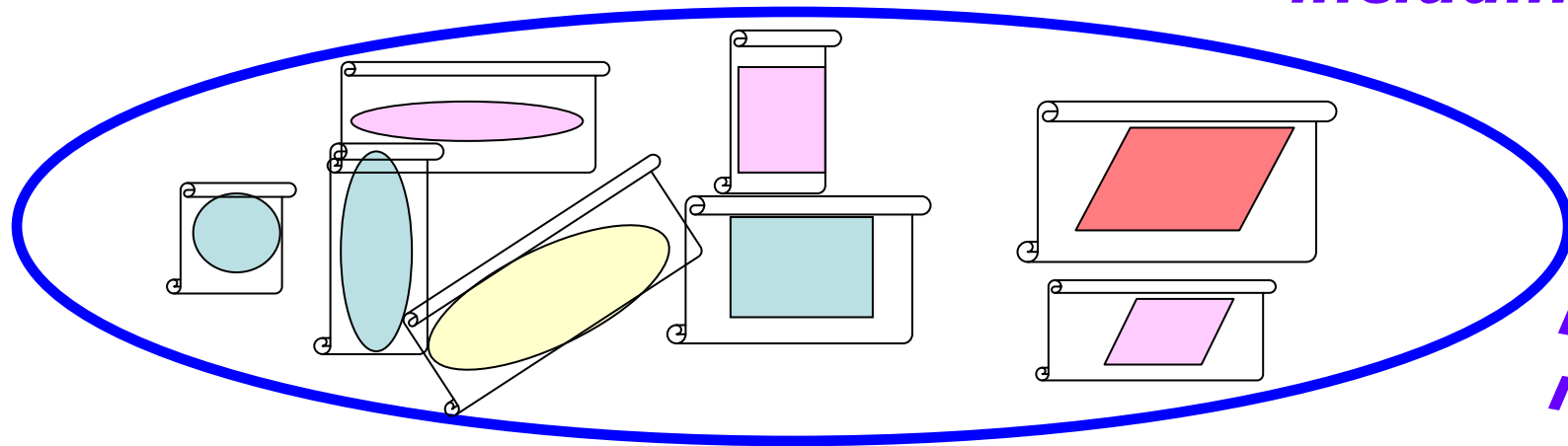
Carlo Scatoli
DG Education and Culture



**European
Qualifications
Framework**

Qualifications frameworks

bring together qualifications

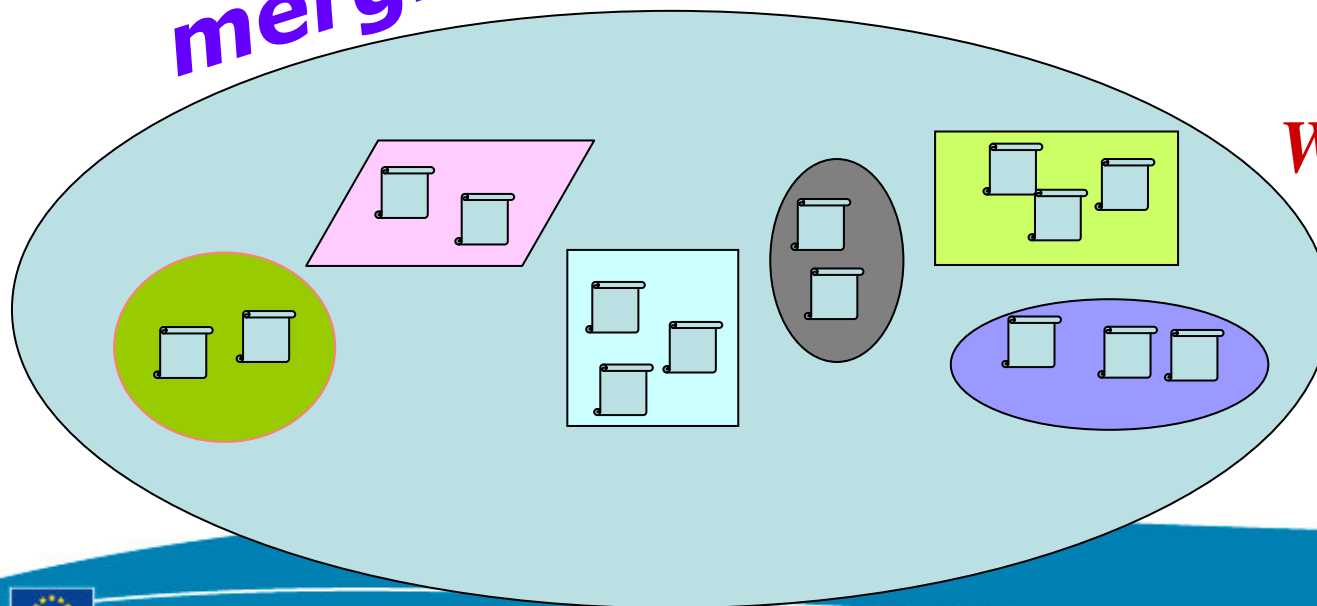


including
o
r
d
e
r
i
n
g
connecting

and give them a structure

A transnational qualifications framework could bring together national qualifications directly

*Connecting
including
ordering
merging*



*Is this possible
without reforming
NQS?
Without reforming
the national
education and
training systems?*

The only option for the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

- * a meta-framework *EU initiative*
- * to connect, but not to merge nor reform...

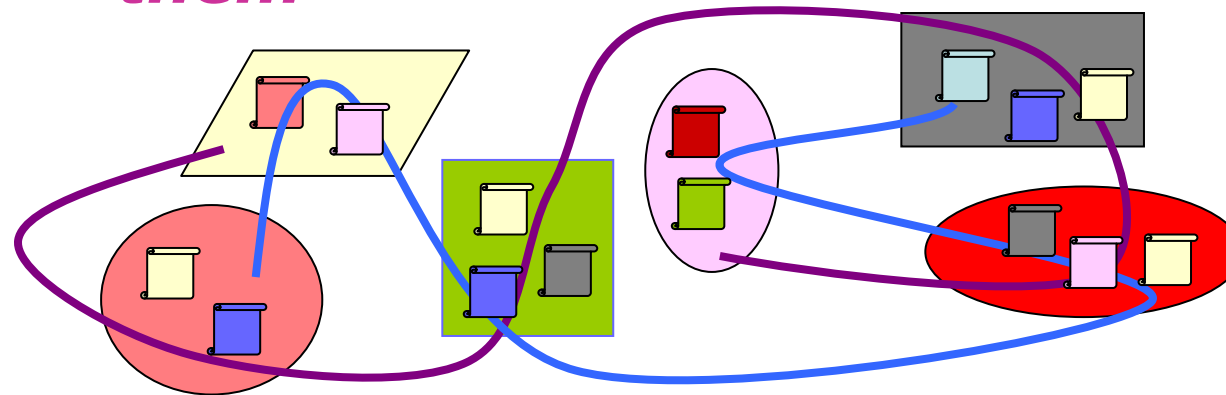
National competences ...the national qualifications systems and frameworks
...the national education and training systems



The EQF meta-framework brings together...

**Connecting
systems - but
not including,
nor ordering
them**

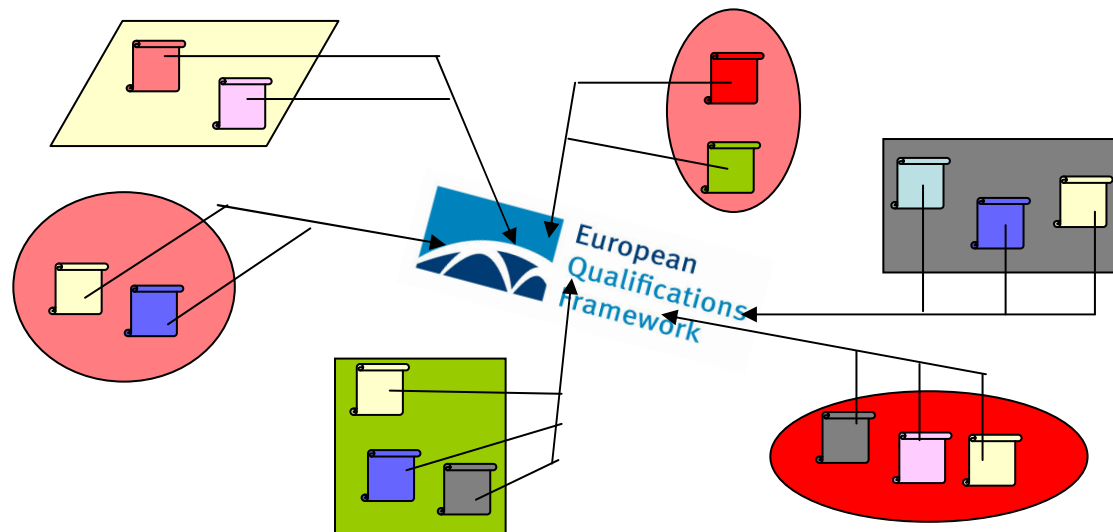
**...national qualifications
frameworks and systems**



**EQF is a
meta-
framework**

The EQF brings together qualifications

by way of national systems
and gives them further structure



**EQF is a
meta-
framework**



A EU meta-framework – How to get there?



The making of the EQF

Shared perception of the need
WHY

*Further facilitate mobility of
learners and workers*

Agreement on the response
WHAT

*Make qualifications more
transparent and readable*

Agreement on the instrument
HOW

*Develop a European
meta-framework, making
qualifications easier to
understand throughout Europe,
adopting the learning outcome
approach*

Explicit political consensus
WHY, HOW, WHAT



The making of the EQF



Political consensus

Joint report on education and training strategy of March 2004; Education Councils of November 2004, March 2005 (stressing learning mobility) and 23-24 March 2006 (stressing labour mobility).

Technical development 2004-2006

Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 April 2008

EQF is a voluntary initiative



EQF : a meta-framework for mobility

**EQF will make qualifications easier
to understand, appreciate and compare,
and possibly to recognise,
helping people move
across countries and across sectors,
in the European labour market and
lifelong learning area.**



EQF : a meta-framework for lifelong learning

EQF covers **all levels** of **qualifications**,
facilitates **gateways** between subsystems of
education and training, promotes
validation of non formal learning.

EQF adopts and promotes the use of
learning outcomes,
a radical change of attitude in many
education and training systems.



Learning outcomes and qualifications frameworks



What a learner knows, understands or is able to do at the end of a learning process

The adoption of learning outcomes, as opposed to formal features to define qualifications, is essential for qualifications **meta**-frameworks

Learning outcomes allow connecting qualifications across sectors, systems (general education, vocational training, higher education), **national boundaries**, considering non-formal learning and **connecting frameworks**



EQF - Structure

- A grid of descriptors defining 8 levels of qualification in terms of **learning outcomes** related to knowledge, skills, competence



EQF - Structure

In the context of the EQF,

Knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual

Skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

Competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.



Example: EQF level 5



	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
L E V E L 5	comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change- review and develop performance of self and others



Example: EQF level 6



	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
L E V E L 6	advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts- take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups



Meta-framework meets meta-framework



The EHEA Qualifications Framework is established in the context of a process of reform.

*A nationally
driven
process*

*Not a EU
initiative*

**It requires national qualifications
frameworks to be established
as a tool to support the reform of the
national higher education systems**



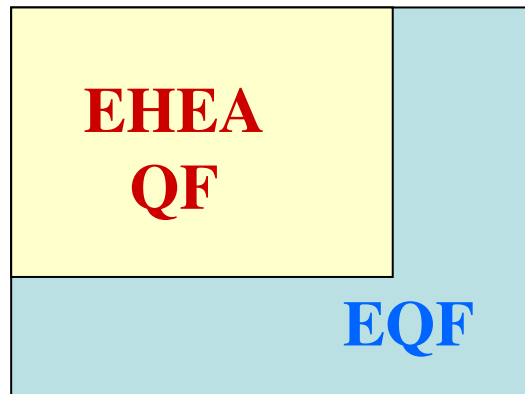
Meta-framework meets meta-framework



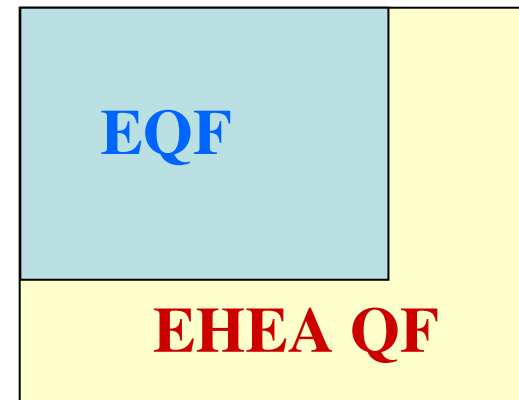
Both EQF and EHEA QF are meta-frameworks.

Their nature, purpose, objective, scope overlap, but are not the same.

Qualification levels



Participating countries



The EQF process

Member States are recommended to:

- **Relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010 by referencing, in a transparent manner, their qualifications levels to the EQF levels**



The EQF process

Member States are recommended to:

- **Ensure that all new qualification certificates, by 2012, contain a clear reference – by way of national qualification systems – to the appropriate EQF level**



The EQF process

- **It is not expressly recommended that Member States set up national qualifications frameworks**

All Member States are now developing NQFs



The EQF process

Member States are recommended to:

- Use an approach based on **learning outcomes** when defining and describing qualifications
- Promote the **validation of non formal and informal learning**
- Promote and apply principles of **quality assurance** in education and training



EQF – Implementation

- **The EQF Advisory Group – set up by the Commission, provides coherence and transparency**
- **The national coordination points – implementation bodies at national level**



EQF – Implementation

The EQF Advisory Group:

Representatives of EUR-32 countries,
Council of Europe (EHEA), social
partners, stakeholders
(Eurochambres, EUCIS-LLL, EUA)

Many parties concerned



The EQF implementation

- **Referencing** – through a transparent methodology – is the first task of the national coordination points
- In particular, the AG has agreed on a set of **criteria and procedures** for referencing national qualification levels to the EQF



The EQF implementation

- **Referencing** means to decide which EQF level is the closest to a given national level
- The target is the **best fit**, rather than the full fit



The EQF implementation

Criteria and procedures in 10 points

to ensure that

the information made public

- is **validated** by the competent authorities
- is **relevant** and **transparent**
- can be **compared**
- generates **trust**

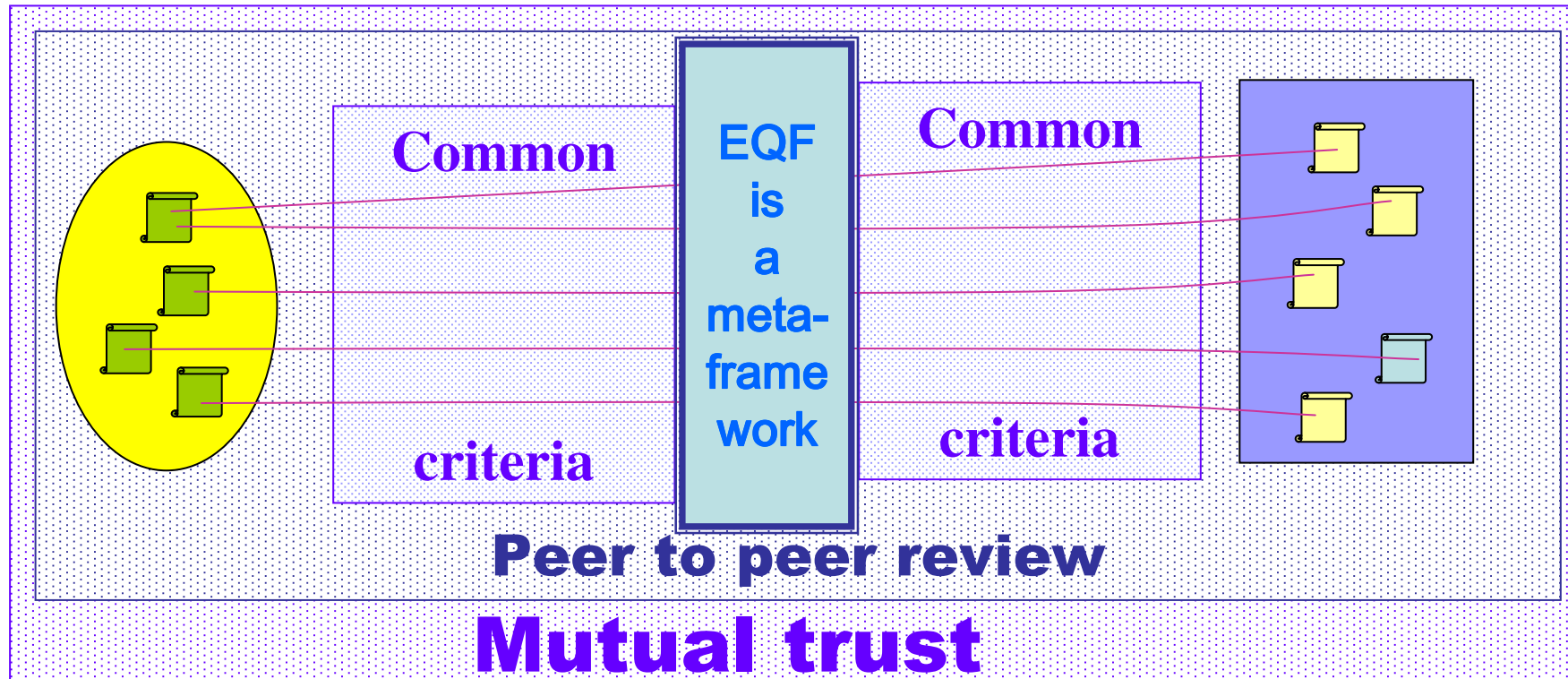
**Close to the EEHA
criteria and
procedures**



The EQF implementation



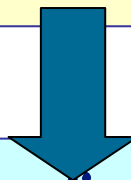
The referencing process



The EQF implementation



The process of referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF



**A national referencing report
for each country
explaining the referencing process
and its results,
addressing the agreed criteria**

2010



The EQF implementation



The process of referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF

Irish report finalised and launched on 17 September 2009

Maltese report finalised and launched on 4 November 2009

(Preparatory) work started in all other countries



The EQF implementation



**16 countries referencing by 2009 or 2010
- fully on schedule**

**10 countries referencing by 2011
- still on schedule for 2012**

5 countries not yet able to estimate

Very provisional information August 2009



Estimate by EQF AG country representatives - August 2009



2009	Ireland (EIRE)		
2009	Malta (MT)		
Final report 2010	France (FR)	Final report 2011	Ceska Republica (CZ)
	Belgie (BE)		Deutschland (DE)
	Danmark (DK)		Ellas (EL)
	Eesti (EE)		España (ES)
	Luxembourg (LU)		Latvia (LV)
	Italia (IT)		Polska PL
	Nederland (NL)		Slovenija (SI)
	Österreich (AT)		Slovensko (SK)
	Portugal (PT)		Sverige (SE)
	Suomi (FI)		Norway (NO)
	United Kingdom (UK)		Magyarország (HU)
	Iceland (IS)		Kypros (CY)
	Croatia (HR)		Lithuania (LT)
	Turkey (TR)		Romania (RO)
	Bulgaria (BG)		



The EQF context



**All Member States are setting up
(or revising)
national qualifications frameworks
with a **lifelong learning** perspective
based on **learning outcomes****



The EQF context



**Most are considering 8 levels,
one 7 levels (Iceland)
some 8 + entry level (UK-England)
some 8 with one or two sublevels (Croatia,
Slovenia)
some more than 8 levels: Ireland and UK-
Scotland**

Mapping by Cedefop August 2009.





Thank you for your attention

carlo.scatoli@ec.europa.eu