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# Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning

**EUCIS-LLL Seminar, Brussels, 12 December 2011**

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# Conceptual Clarifications



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- **Formal learning:** structured learning in formal systems leading to a qualification (e.g. schools, university)
- **Non-formal learning:** planned learning activities, outside formal systems, not by itself leading to a qualification (e.g. work based courses; training by youth organisations)
- **Informal learning:** non-organised, non-structured learning resulting from daily activities (e.g. youth work, voluntary work, taking care of a child)
- **Validation:** a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes against a relevant standard, irrespective of the setting where the learning took place; Steps: identification, documentation, assessment, certification
- **Learning outcomes:** a statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process





# Benefits for individuals

- **Economic benefits:**
  - Better employability, career prospects and working conditions; saved time and money
- **Educational benefits:**
  - Second chance (e.g. school dropouts), credits for prior learning, avoided unnecessary formal E&T, enhanced motivation to learn
- **Personal benefits:**
  - More self-confidence, better awareness of one's own abilities



# Benefits for employers/the economy

- More skilled work force
- Increased visibility of what individuals know, understand and are able to do
- Better skills match, leading to enhanced competitiveness of companies and of the economy:
  - Human capital more productively deployed across the economy
  - Company level: better decisions possible concerning recruitment, staff allocation and skill development





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# Benefits for the society

- Making lifelong learning a reality
- A better qualified population
- Improved use of the full potential of individuals
- Better access to further learning and to the labour market for certain groups: e.g. school dropouts, migrants, low qualified older workers, young mothers;
- A more inclusive labour market



# Validation Acquis on the EU level



- Lifelong Learning policy (since 1995): includes formal, non-formal and informal learning (also used: life wide learning)
- Common European principles on validation (2004)
- European Qualification Framework (2008)
- European Guidelines on validation (2009)
- European Inventory on validation (latest update: 2010)
- Europass (+ other passes), credit systems (ECVET, ECTS)





# European Qualification Framework



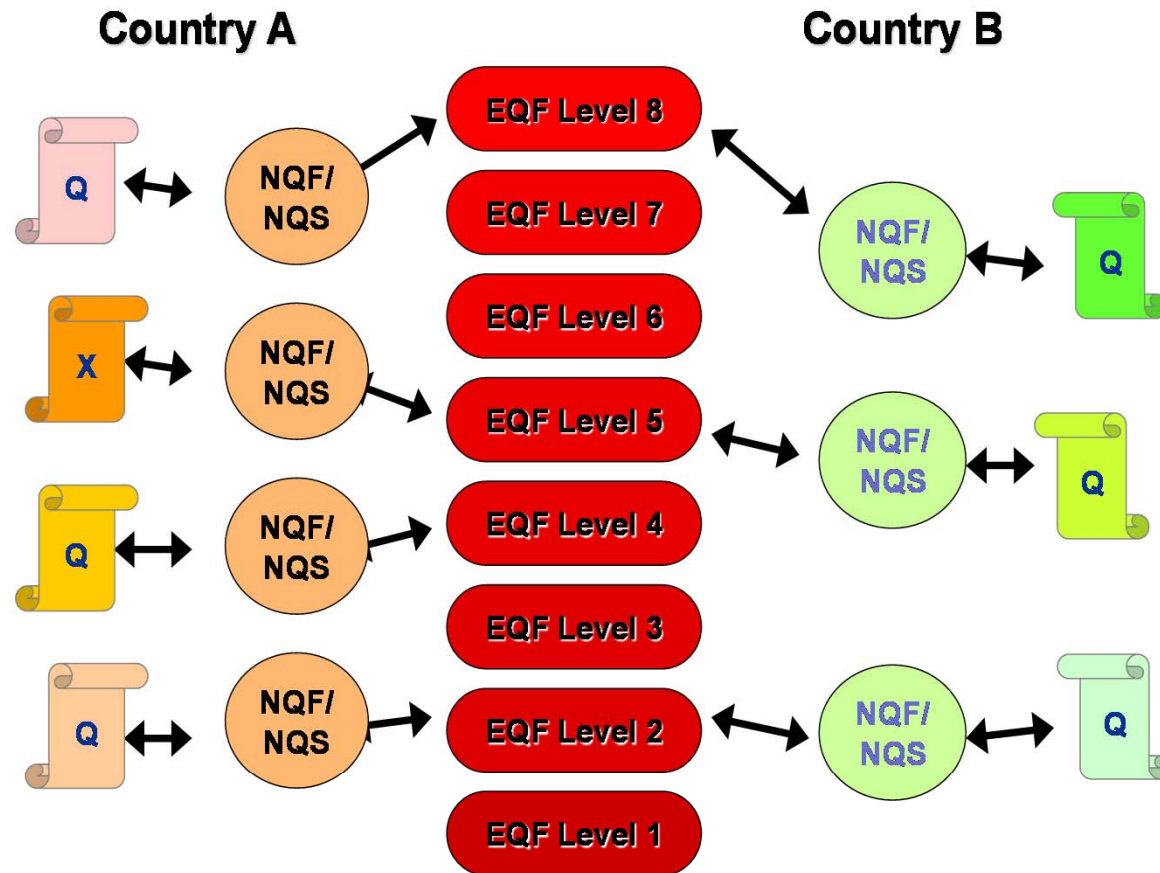
- European Reference Levels: 8 qualification levels describing learning outcomes
- Reference of national qualifications levels to the EQF (all types and levels)
- Setting up of National Qualifications Frameworks
- Enhancing the transparency and comparability of qualifications
- Promotion of validation of NFIL, but no indication on how to do this



# EQF Comparison



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# Invisible and undervalued knowledge, skills and competences

- Large heterogeneity of validation situations in Member States:
  - Only four Member States have a comprehensive validation system with a high take up
  - Disparity of entitlements between citizens: obstacle to their portability across borders
- The full potential of a well functioning European Lifelong Learning area cannot be reached without validation
- Shortcomings of current tools and instruments



# Policy Context: EU 2020 Strategy



- **Flagships:**
  - Youth on the Move
  - Agenda for New Skills and Jobs
  - Digital Agenda
  - Poverty Platform
  
- **Benchmarks:**
  - Early School leaving < 10 %
  - Tertiary Education Attainment > 40 %
  - Employment rate > 75 %
  - Risk of Poverty and social exclusion < 20 %



# Council Recommendation



- Announced by EU 2020 Strategy and Single Market Act
- Validation as a lever for competitiveness and growth
- Measures addressed to Member States:
  - Validation systems linked to qualification frameworks
  - Entitlements for individuals
  - Creating trust and confidence in validation
  - Stakeholder involvement
- Measures addressed to the Commission:
  - Regular update of European Inventory & Guidelines
  - Funding through ESF and Erasmus for All
  - Peer learning





# Timetable for the Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning



- **Public consultation**  
December 2010 - February 2011
- **Impact Assessment**  
Ongoing
- **Proposal of Council Recommendation**  
Early 2012
- **Adoption of the Recommendation** Danish  
Presidency

