

NQF state of play **Belgium-FL 2018**

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Introduction and context

On 30 April 2009 the Flemish Parliament and Government in Belgium adopted the act on the qualification structure ([1]) (*kwalificatiestructuur*) introducing a comprehensive qualifications framework, covering all levels and types of qualifications. The framework, based on an eight-level structure described by the two main categories of knowledge/skills and context/autonomy/responsibility, was formally referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in June 2011.

The road from formal adoption to implementation proved more time-consuming than originally predicted. Delays were partly caused by the need for further legal instruments (implementation decrees on professional and educational qualifications), and partly by negotiations with the social partners on how to link and level professional qualifications to the framework. This clarification was largely completed by 2013-14, allowing implementation to speed up ([2]). An update of the reference-report was presented in 2014.

The Flemish qualifications framework (FQF) is operational, including by February 2019 a total of 384 professional (*Beroepskwalificatie*) and 252 educational qualifications (*Onderwijskwalificatie*) at level 6 and 7 in the qualifications database ([3]). Professional qualifications have been levelled individually (as opposed to a placement 'block-wise') in a process involving the main social partners.

The qualifications framework for higher education was self-certified against the qualifications framework of the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in 2009 and is an integrate part of the FQF for lifelong learning.

Policy objectives

The 2009 act on the qualifications structure defines the Flemish qualification system as '... a systematic classification of recognised qualifications based on a generally adopted qualifications framework (FQF)'. The qualification structure (including the qualifications framework) aims at making qualifications and their mutual relationships transparent, so that stakeholders in education (students, pupils and providers) and in the labour market (social partners) '/.../ can communicate unambiguously about qualifications and the associated competences' (Flemish Parliament, 2009, Chapter I, Article 3).

The act underlines that the qualification structure (including the qualifications framework) should act as a reference:

- a. for quality assurance, for developing and renewing courses;
- b. for developing and aligning procedures for recognising acquired competences;
- c. for comparison (nationally and at European level) of qualifications.

This indicates that the FQF is seen as more than a simple description of existing qualifications: it plays a role in the continuous review and renewal of qualifications.

In 2018, the Flemish Government launched changes in secondary education (new educational structure and update of content) aiming to help reduce social inequalities. With this reform, starting in 2019 ([4]), the FQF is seen as an instrument reshaping the structure and content of secondary education. It is stipulated in legislation that educational qualifications are a leading principle of this reform. In vocational educational programmes, professional qualifications are integrated in educational qualifications ([5]). The new policy reform aims at introducing the concept of 'competences' as a reference within secondary education. There is also reform at level 5 where the current higher vocational education HBO5 ([6]) will be transformed into short-cycle HE qualification as a recognised specialised professional qualification for the FQF and EQF at level 5 (European Commission and Cedefop (2018). This short-cycle qualification will give access to bachelor (level 6) ([7]).

On 1 September 2019, this short cycle degree will be considered a fully fledged component of higher education, to attract pupils who currently do not find their way to tertiary education (see the national reform

programme (NRP) 2018). Only one type of higher VET qualification at level 5 (HBO5) will continue: the post-secondary programme for nurses at FQF/EQF level 5.

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

The term 'competence' plays a significant role in Flemish education, training and employment policies and is used as an overarching concept. Competence and learning outcomes are used as interchangeable terms in education and training with the exception of higher education.

The FQF is based on an eight-level structure described by the categories of knowledge and skills, and context, autonomy and responsibility. Compared to the EQF, FQF descriptors are more detailed, particularly for lower levels. A main feature of the Flemish framework is the use of 'context' as an explicit element of the descriptors. The context in which an individual is able to function is seen as an important part of any qualification.

The descriptors are used to describe two main categories of qualification; professional and educational. A professional qualification is based on a set of competences allowing an individual to exercise a profession and can be achieved both inside and outside education. An educational qualification is based on a set of competences an individual needs to participate in society, to continue education and/or to exercise professional activities. An educational qualification can only be acquired through participating in an education programme and in education institutions recognised by the Flemish authorities. Depending on the educational level and the form of vocational education, educational qualifications may consist of one or more professional qualifications, final objectives and/or specific final objectives ([8]). The distinction between professional and educational qualifications is applied for all eight levels ([9]) of the framework; allowing professional qualifications to be placed at high levels in parallel to traditional academic qualifications.

Practical implementation of the principles of learning outcomes/competences has progressed in recent years. The VET sector is probably the most experienced in this field. A competence-based approach is well integrated, referring to professional requirements in the labour market. The use of competences in initial VET has been inspired by Dutch developments, particularly the upper secondary vocational education (*middelbaar beroepsonderwijs*, MBO) reform. Learning outcomes are also present in general education, for example by the setting of learning objectives/the attainment targets in national core

curricula.

A public debate ([10]) on the attainment targets/learning outcomes for secondary education, including vocationally oriented secondary education (initial VET), took place between February and June 2016. Following the advice of the Council of State, the Flemish Government adopted on 2 February 2018 a decree ([11]) on altering the secondary education structure and the renewal of learning outcomes for compulsory education ([12]). The decree stipulates 16 'key competences' ([13]), based on the results of the public debate. All these key competences need to be considered as broad thematic domains, which will be further operationalised in attainment targets. For this reason, development committees have been established, comprising representatives of education networks, teachers and academics.

In the first half of 2018, the new attainment targets for the first grade of secondary education were developed, within the framework of the above key competences. They were validated by the Flemish Parliament on 5 December 2018. Their implementation will start in September 2019. In November 2018, development committees started the development of the attainment targets for the second and third grade of secondary education, though only for those tracks preparing for tertiary education. Although it has been agreed that more attention needs to be given to key competences in the vocationally oriented tracks, it is still subject to debate which of the presently developed attainment targets for the 2nd and 3rd grades will be implemented in the vocational tracks as well.

Developments in higher education have been influenced by the Bologna process, but are mainly dependent on initiatives taken by single institutions or associations of higher education institutes. While reflecting a diverse situation, a clear strengthening of the learning outcomes principle has taken place in Flanders. Learning outcomes that have been acquired previously can (after successful assessment or validation of them) lead to acquisition of the corresponding credits in higher education. Credits are referred to in Flanders as 'study points', while students who successfully complete a course or modules are awarded a credit certificate ([14]) (European Commission et al., forthcoming). At levels 6 to 8, the Parliament Act of 2009 ([15]) states that higher education institutions will jointly describe the subject-specific learning outcomes for higher education courses. The validated descriptions of the subject-specific learning outcomes are automatically recognised as educational qualifications by the Flemish Government and published in the Flemish qualifications database (European Commission and Cedefop,

2018).

In adult education, a working group of representatives of education and representatives of the Flemish public employment service are working together in developing education and training programmes. In this way the content of both types of programme is based on professional qualifications standards and the building blocks that are part of the programmes are the same or compatible. Training programmes outside formal education (for example, the public employment service, the Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training) can be based on professional qualifications (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The Flemish national qualifications framework process has involved a broad range of stakeholders at all stages ([16]), coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Training. Other ministries – Ministry of Labour and Social Economy and Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media – have also been involved. From the education and training side, participation by relevant sectors (general education, initial, continuing and higher vocational education and training, and higher education) has been important. Both the Minister of Education and the Minister of Work and Social Economy wanted a closer alignment between education and training and the labour market. To formalise this collaboration, an overarching management committee of education, training and work has been created to prepare and monitor policy decisions.

The day-to-day running of the FQF has been delegated to the Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education Qualifications and Study Allowances (*AHOVOKS, Agentschap voor Hoger Onderwijs, Volwassenenonderwijs, Kwalificaties en Studietoelagen*) ([17]). The agency was appointed as EQF NCP and is responsible for coordinating the process of implementation, involving all stakeholders through expert committees.

Quality assurance is an important topic on the policy agenda in Belgium Flanders. The main body overseeing quality assurance for professional qualifications, as well as the integrated framework for quality assurance for professional qualifications, is AHOVOKS ([18]). The development of occupational standards is supervised by AHOVOKS, involving sectoral representatives of employers and employees, VDAB, Syntra Vlaanderen (Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurship Training), independent experts and education and training providers.

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) ensures the quality of **higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders** by **assessing and accrediting programmes**, as well as contributing to improving **quality** ([19]).

Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

[20]

Validation of non-formal and informal learning has been well-established on the public policy agenda in Belgium. In Flanders, the term EVC (*erkennen van competenties*: recognition of competences) is used to refer to the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Validation is used to gain admission to an education and training programme, to request exemptions from (parts of) the study programme and to obtain a work experience certificate ([21]). Validation is a matter of policy in different sectors and the arrangements in these sectors differ as each Ministry department regulates validation within its own sector. Validation practices in the different sectors have not changed substantially since 2016. The main change has been increased cooperation between different validation providers (inside as well as outside education) and the willingness to create a single integrated framework linking validation processes to the FQF.

New developments in quality assurance have also taken place. A decree ([22]) approved by the Flemish government in February 2019 has the aim of strengthening the coherence of validation systems. An integrated quality framework has been developed in this decree; it will serve as the basis for a system of external quality assurance for all courses resulting in a professional qualification at all levels ([23]). This will ensure that all people following professional courses or procedures for recognition of prior learning (RPL) resulting in the same professional qualifications titles, also obtain the same set of competences after completion of the course or procedure.

Readily accessible information and guidance is provided in Belgium Flanders, but awareness-raising efforts will only be increased once the new, integrated approach enters into force. All information on validation in Flanders is available to the public via a dedicated website ([24]).

NQF implementation and impact

The road from adoption to implementation and operational status has proved complex for the Flemish NQF. The transformation of the 2009 law into practice was needed: it required the introduction of a series of 'implementation decrees' ([25]) as well as clarification of the role of the social partners in linking professional qualifications to the framework. A qualifications framework for higher education linked to the Bologna process was developed and put in place (2008) ([26]).

The FQF distinguishes between 'professional qualifications' and 'educational qualifications'. By February 2019, a total of 384 professional and 252 educational qualifications (mostly bachelor and master degrees) were formally included in the FQF and published in the Flemish qualifications database ([27]), indicating the NQF/EQF level ([28]). Educational qualifications at levels 1 to 4 are still under revision and have not been included in the database. It is also worth noting that professional qualifications cover a wide span, currently covering levels 2 to 7 (384 professional qualifications (*Beroepskwalificatie*) ([29])). This demonstrates the increasingly important role of the framework in making this part of the qualification landscape more visible.

Flemish professional qualifications are developed within a tripartite system, giving the social partners, in the context of the Social and Economic Committee (SERV), a decisive role. All professional qualifications build on professional competence profiles ([30]) defined and approved by the social partners: a professional qualification has to reflect the competences of the profile and no single professional qualification description can be approved without social partner input and approval. While time-consuming and challenging, the inclusion of professional qualifications into the FQF can be deemed a success as it demonstrates that stakeholders are fully involved and responsible for implementing the framework.

So far, the FQF's communication efforts have been primarily oriented towards partners at macro and meso level (representatives of other policy domains, social partners, sectoral organisations, education institutions, learners). Dissemination of information about the NQF is carried out via the NQF website ([31]), brochures with technical information ([32]) and seminars, meetings with sectoral organisations. The guidance and counselling practitioners of the Flemish public employment service (VDAB) and the stakeholders that develop

professional qualifications use the same reference framework (the Competent database) ([33]). The Flemish public employment service is also involved in meetings about policy decisions on qualifications ([34]). Until reform of secondary education is implemented, the FQF will not be well known by guidance and counselling practitioners working in schools (European Commission and Cedefop (2018)).

In the new legislation on secondary education, it is stated that FQF/EQF levels have to be mentioned on certificates and diplomas, only for the IVET apprenticeship system, *duaal leren* ([35]). The FQF/EQF levels are not included on Europass supplements for professional and educational qualifications and there is no intention to include them in the near future.

An evaluation of the framework has not yet been made.

Referencing to the EQF

The FQF was referenced to the EQF in June 2011, and an updated report was submitted in March 2014. A qualifications framework for higher education linked to the Bologna process was put in place in 2008 and self-certified to the QF-EHEA in 2009.

Important lessons and future plans

The NQF is considered operational. A qualifications database has been established and a large number of qualifications has been already included (mostly professional qualifications and educational qualifications from higher education (bachelor and master degrees). Educational qualifications at levels 1 to 4 are being revised and are not yet included: the framework plays a role in the continuous review and renewal of qualifications. Stakeholders consider implementation of the FQF for professional qualifications to be successful (European Commission and Cedefop (2018).

Future FQF plans include updating and reviewing more qualifications and including them in the register and framework.

An integrated quality assurance system for professional qualifications, when complete, will further strengthen the role of the framework in building trust in professional qualifications and acquired competences, independent of the way they were obtained.

The key challenges for FQF implementation in the coming period are related to alignment between social partners and education and training providers, who can have a different view on the use of qualifications in education and training programmes. Discussion is continuing with formal providers of secondary education on the way to integrate professional qualifications into educational qualifications in secondary vocation and technical education (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

Main sources of information

- Flemish qualifications framework website:
<http://vlaamsekwalificatiestructuur.be/en/>
- Flemish qualifications database: https://app.akov.be/pls/pakov/f?p=VLAAMSE_KWALIFICATIESTRUCTUUR:KWALIFICATIEDATABANK
- The Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances (*Agentschap voor Hoger Onderwijs, Volwassenenonderwijs, Kwalificaties en Studietoelagen - AHOVOKS*) acts as EQF NCP:
<https://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/nl/agentschap-voor-hoger-onderwijs-volwassenenonderwijs-kwalificaties-en-studietoelagen-ahovoks>
- AKOV (2014). *Referencing of the Flemish qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework.*
<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/referencing-reports-and-contacts>

National qualification framework (NQF)

NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES	EQF LEVEL
8	Doctoral degree (Universiteit - Doctor) Category Educational qualifications	8
7	Academic master degree (Universiteit - Master) Category Educational qualifications Advanced master programmes (master na master - manama) Category Educational qualifications Professional qualifications Examples: Librarian/information manager (Bibliothecaris/Informatiemanager) Physiotherapist (Kinesitherapeut) Archivist/information manager (Archivaris/informatiebeheerder)	7

6

Academic bachelor degree (Universiteit - Bachelor)

6

Category

Educational qualifications

Professional bachelor degree (Hogeschool - Bachelor)

Category

Educational qualifications

Advanced bachelor programme (bachelor na bachelor - banaba)

Category

Educational qualifications

Professional qualifications

Examples: Dietitian (Diëtist)

Dental technologist (Dentaaltechnoloog)

Textile designer (Textielontwerper)

5

Higher vocational education 5 (Hoger Beroepsonderwijs 5)

5

Category

Educational qualifications

Professional qualifications

Examples: Archive expert (Archiefdeskundige)

Coordinator-advisor of decorative painting (Coördinator - adviseur decoratieve schilderwerken)

Police inspector (Inspecteur Politie)

**Upper secondary general education school
leaving certificate (Algemeen Secundair
Onderwijs - ASO)**

Category

Educational qualifications

**Upper secondary technical education school
leaving certificate (Technisch Secundair
Onderwijs - TSO)**

Category

Educational qualifications

**Upper secondary artistic education leaving
certificate (Kunstsecundair Onderwijs - KSO)**

Category

Educational qualifications

**Secondary-after-secondary education certificate
in upper secondary technical education
(Secundair na Secundair - SenSe - TSO)**

Category

Educational qualifications

**Certificate of a specialisation year (7th year) in
upper secondary vocational education (BSO)**

Category

Educational qualifications

Professional qualifications

Examples: Barman (barman)

Electrician (Elektromecanicien)

Commercial assistant (Commercieel assistant)

Pastry chef (Banketbakker)

3	<p>Upper secondary vocational education certificate (Beroepssecundair Onderwijs - BSO)</p> <p>Category</p> <p>Educational qualifications</p> <p>Professional qualifications</p> <p>Examples: Construction welder (Constructielasser)</p> <p>Florist assistant (Assistent florist)</p> <p>Driver in the fuel service (Chauffeur in de brandstoffenhandel)</p>	3
2	<p>Adult basic education</p> <p>Category</p> <p>Educational qualifications</p> <p>Lower secondary education - first stage of secondary education</p> <p>Category</p> <p>Educational qualifications</p> <p>Pre-vocational education</p> <p>Category</p> <p>Educational qualifications</p> <p>Professional qualifications</p> <p>Examples: Animal production assistant (Assistent dierlijke productie)</p> <p>Room service employee (Medewerker kamerdienst)</p> <p>Bakery employee (Medewerker bakkerij)</p>	2
1	<p>Certificate of elementary education (6 years)</p> <p>Category</p> <p>Educational qualifications</p>	1

Acronyms

AKOV	<i>Agentschap voor Kwaliteitszorg in Onderwijs en Vorming</i> [Agency for quality assurance in education and training]
AHOVOKS	<i>Agentschap voor Hoger Onderwijs, Volwassenenonderwijs, Kwalificaties en Studietoelagen</i> [Agency for higher education, adult education, qualifications and study grants]
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register
EQF	European qualifications framework
FQF	<i>Vlaamse qualificatiestructuur</i> Flemish qualifications framework
HBO5	<i>hoger beroepsonderwijs</i> [Higher vocational education 5]
MBO	<i>middelbaar beroepsonderwijs</i> [upper secondary vocational education]
NQF	national qualifications framework
NVAO	<i>De Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie</i> [Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders]
RAC	recognition of acquired competences
SCHE	short-cycle higher education
SERV	Social and Economic Committee
VDAB	Flemish public employment and vocational training service
VET	vocational education and training

References

[URLs accessed 18.3.2019].

Cedefop (2016). *Application of learning outcomes approaches across Europe: a comparative study*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3074>

Cedefop (forthcoming). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19: Belgium*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies (forthcoming).

Cedefop (forthcoming). *Spotlight on vocational education and training: 2018 compilation*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

European Commission (2018). *Education and training monitor 2018: Belgium*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2018-belgium_en.pdf

European Commission; Cedefop (2018). *Survey on implementation, communication and use of NQF/EQF* [unpublished].

European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International (forthcoming). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018: country report: Belgium (BE-FI)*.

Government of Flanders; AKOV (2011). *Referencing the Flemish qualifications framework to the European qualification framework*. http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/kwalificatiestructuur/european-qualifications-framework/koppelingsrapport-vks-eqf/files/Koppelingsrapport_EN_2014-FINAAL.pdf

Government of Flanders; AKOV (2014). *Referencing of the Flemish qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework: update of the referencing report of July 2011*.

<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/referencing-reports-and-contacts>

OECD (2017). *Education policy outlook: Belgium*.

<http://www.oecd.org/education/Education-Policy-Outlook-Country-Profile-Belgium.pdf>

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2009). *Self-certification of the Dutch and Flemish national qualifications frameworks for higher education vis-à-vis the overarching framework for qualifications of the European higher education area: report of the Verification Committee on*

Flanders (2 February 2009).

http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/Qualifications_frameworks/78/8/NQF_Flemish_National_Qualifications_Framework_596788.pdf

Vlaams Hervormingsprogramma/VHP (2018). *Programme national de réforme 2018 [National reform programme 2018]*.

http://www.be2020.eu/uploaded/files/201805041043430.NRP_2018_Belgium.pdf

Notes

[1] Flemish Parliament (2009) Decreet betreffende de kwalificatiestructuur [Act on the qualification structure]. Belgisch Staatsblad, 16.7.2009, p. 49597. <http://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=14111> [accessed 19.3.2019].

[2] The implementation decisions for professional qualifications were agreed by the Flemish Government in January 2013. The implementation decision which operationalises educational qualifications level (1-4) was approved in January 2014. The implementation decisions for educational qualifications level 4 (Se-n-Se) and 5 were agreed by the Flemish Government in January 2013 (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

[3] The qualification database (Kwalificatiedatabank):

https://app.akov.be/pls/pakov/f?p=VLAAMSE_KWALIFICATIESTRUCTUUR:KWALIFICATIEDATABANK

[accessed February 2019].

[4] The reform of secondary education will start on 1 September 2019 and be finalised in 2026 (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

[5] Educational qualifications are based on learning outcomes determined by education level. The parliament Act on the Flemish qualification structure makes a distinction between the procedures for recognition at levels 1-5 and levels 6-8 (Government of Flanders; AKOV (2011)).

[6] HBO5 comprises vocationally-oriented training programmes organised at FQF/EQF level 5 which do not lead to a bachelor or master degree (European Commission and Cedefop (2018)).

[7] It will, however, be the autonomy of higher education institutions to determine whether students of the short-cycle can receive credit exemptions.

[8] [http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/kwalificatiestructuur/links-en-publicaties/bijlagen/Brochure-Developed_Approved_Implemented-\(En\)-12-2012.pdf](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/kwalificatiestructuur/links-en-publicaties/bijlagen/Brochure-Developed_Approved_Implemented-(En)-12-2012.pdf)

[9] There are currently no professional qualifications at levels 1 and 8.

[10] This debate involved around 40 000 participants, half of which were young learners. The 2006 EU-key-competences framework served as one of the reference documents. More information can be found at:

<http://www.onsonderwijs.be/>

[11] More information can be found at:

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-reforms-school-education-3_en#2017_Modernisation_of_secondary_education_legislative_process

[12] Compulsory education lasts for a maximum of twelve school years, up to the age of 18 or as soon as a pupil obtains the diploma of secondary education.

[13] The 16 'key competences' relate to: physical and mental well-being, Dutch, other languages, digital and media literacy, social competences, civic competences, historical awareness, spatial awareness, sustainable development, economic and financial competences, judicial competences, learning and research competences (critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, self-consciousness and self-expression, entrepreneurial competences, cultural consciousness and expression.

[14] Students get credits for parts of the learning programme for which they were successfully assessed.

[15] Flemish Parliament (2009) Decreet betreffende de kwalificatiestructuur [Act on the qualification structure]. Belgisch Staatsblad, 16.7.2009, p. 49597. <http://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=14111> [accessed 18.3.2019].

[16] In the Flemish Community, the Department for Education and Training coordinates policy and three executive autonomous agencies are responsible for implementation, as well as the autonomous Education Inspectorate. The three agencies are AgODI, (Agency for Educational Services for elementary, secondary, part-time artistic education, student guidance centres), AHOVOKS (Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances) and AGION, (Agency for Educational Infrastructure), which is responsible for designing, planning, building and renovating school buildings for grant-aided public and private schools. Source: <http://www.oecd.org/education/Education-Policy-Outlook-Country-Profile-Belgium.pdf>

[17] AHOVOKS took over this role from the Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training (AKOV, Agentschap voor Kwaliteitszorg in Onderwijs en Vorming), which has been discontinued due to reorganisation of the Flemish administration.

[18] AHOVOKS has made available a self-assessment instrument to help organisations assess the quality of their validation procedures. More information can be found at: <http://erkennenvancompetenties.be/evc-professionals/evc-toolbox/> [accessed 18.3.2019].

[19] NVAO is listed on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). More information on NVAO can be found at: http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/NVAO_-_Accreditation_Organisation_of_the_Netherlands_and_Flanders [accessed 18.3.2019].

[20] This section draws mainly on input from 2018 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning

(European Commission et al., forthcoming).

[21] Legislation is planned that it will make it possible that an individual will receive a professional qualification after an EVC-procedure.

[22] Flemish Government (2019). Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering betreffende de uitvoering van het decreet van (datum) betreffende een geïntegreerd beleid voor de erkenning van verworven competenties [Decision of the Flemish Government concerning the implementation of the decree of (date) concerning an integrated policy for the recognition of acquired competences]. <https://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/nbwa-news-message-document/document/090135578027091c>; Flemish

Giovernment (2019). Ontwerp van besluit betreffende de uitvoering van het decreet betreffende een geïntegreerd beleid voor de erkenning van verworven competenties (EVC) [Draft decision on the implementation of the decree concerning an integrated policy for the recognition of acquired competences (EVC)]. <https://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/nbwa-news-message-document/document/090135578027091b>

[23] This decree covers professional qualifications at levels 1-4 as well as professional qualifications at levels 5-8 obtained outside HE.

[24] EVC à erkennen van competenties:

<http://www.erkennenvancompetenties.be/> [accessed December 2016].

[25] For an overview over legal initiatives between 2009 and 2017, see: <http://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/#>

[26] The relationship between the two framework initiatives was discussed throughout the development process and the 2009 act takes this into account in its terminology, framework descriptors and procedures.

[27] Flemish qualifications database: https://app.akov.be/pls/pakov/f?p=VLAAMSE_KWALIFICATIESTRUCTUUR:KWALIFICATIEDATABANK

[28] This applies for higher education qualifications; for professional qualifications only the NQF level is mentioned.

[29] There are 42 professional qualifications at level 2, 108 at level 3, 135 at level 4, 78 at level 5, 15 at level 6 and 6 at level 7. Source: Flemish qualifications database.

[30] Occupational competence profiles had been defined using the Competent database created by the SERV. The database itself built on the French operational directory of professions and jobs (Répertoire opérationnel des métiers et des emplois - ROME), which was adapted to the Flemish labour market (Cedefop, forthcoming).

[31] Flemish qualifications framework website:

<http://vlaamsekwalificatiestructuur.be/en/>

[32] <http://vlaamsekwalificatiestructuur.be/wat-is-vks/meer-info-en-downloads/>

[33] The Competent database can be accessed at:

<http://production.competent.be/competent-nl/main.html>

[34] VDAB organises numerous practically oriented vocational training programmes in almost all vocational and attitudinal (work related behaviour, adaptation to the work situation, career and job-orientation courses) fields and also offers Dutch-as-a-second-language and ICT courses. These courses are offered in a flexible and individually tailored way (timetable, methods, place, module scheduled). When there is a professional qualification available that corresponds with a vocational training programme, VDAB updates the content of the training programme so that is completely in line with the competences of the professional qualification (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

[35] See Article 33 of the decision: Flemish Government (2018). Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering houdende uitvoeringsmaatregelen betreffende het dual leren en de aanloopfase en diverse andere maatregelen [Decision of the Flemish Government concerning implementing measures concerning dual learning and the start-up phase and various other measures]. Belgisch Staatsblad, p. 79631, 19.10.2018. <https://data-onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/edulex/document.aspx?docid=15263>

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