

**2<sup>nd</sup> POLICY LEARNING FORUM:****Defining and writing learning outcomes for VET qualifications***Cedefop, Thessaloniki 13-14 October 2016***Second working group session****Working Group 2****Developing a common format for the presentation of learning outcomes****Work flow**

The working group discussed issues related to developing a common format for the presentation of learning outcomes. Koen Nomden moderated the session, introducing the thematic focus of the workshop and explaining the session flow. The participants were presented with questions for further exploring the topic of the common European format for presenting learning outcomes. Participants split in 5 sub-groups to discuss the questions listed below. A representative of each sub-group shared the main key messages discussed to all participants of WG2. Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop, was the rapporteur of the five working groups.

**The discussion focused on the following questions:**

1. What added value can a common format presenting learning outcomes bring?
2. For which purposes can a format be used?
3. Which are the obstacles to be addressed for a common format to be widely used across Europe?
4. What is required for the current (rough) draft of a common format to be of practical use?
5. Which could be the basic structure or the requirements of the format? (i.e. short? supported by guidelines? a description with limited characters, etc?)

**The key messages can be summarized as follows:****QU1 – What added value can a common format presenting learning outcomes bring?**

- ✓ **no common European format** currently exists for describing qualifications and their learning outcomes: this hinders their comparability;
- ✓ information on the content of a qualification is often **difficult to find** as it is in general neither systematically included in qualifications databases and registers nor shared at European level;
- ✓ a common format of qualifications or common format of presenting learning outcomes would bring **clarity**;
- ✓ an increased need for a **common language** across countries is observed due to the diversity of the national settings; countries are proceeding in different speeds and have different understanding of concepts;
- ✓ **deepening** the impact and leveling process of **EQF**-reaching educational institutions.

**QU2 – For which purposes can a format be used?**

- ✓ the main purpose is to develop a standard format for **presenting outcome-based qualifications** to be used for **comparison purposes**;

- ✓ **mobility** of labour forces in Europe;
- ✓ **exchange** of information;
- ✓ develop mutual **understanding, strengthen transparency, ensure comparability**;
- ✓ **ease** of use;

**QU3 – Which are the obstacles to be addressed for a common format to be widely used across Europe?**

- ✓ level of **generality** versus **specificity**;
- ✓ **standardization** vs specificity – the format cannot be so standard as it is difficult to present the same things in labour market and it might lack specificity; guidance is needed;
- ✓ some participants expressed worries about possible **duplication** of work due to existing formats: ESCO, Europass certificate supplements; what is the value of an additional format? to develop future developments of qualification supplements?

**QU4 – What is required for the current (rough) draft of a common format to be of practical use?**

- ✓ the basic point is to keep it **simple**; the format by itself might not be enough;
- ✓ info on assessment criteria;
- ✓ it has to contain not only information on the learning outcomes of the qualifications but also information on **quality assurance** and possible **credits**; and on the **levels**

**QU5 – Which could be the basic structure or the requirements of the format? (i.e. short? supported by guidelines? a description with limited characters, etc?)**

- ✓ LOs descriptions should be **short** (with limited characters) and **understandable** (as proposed by the handbook);
- ✓ the format should be supported by **guidelines** (for qualification profiles, assessment..)
- ✓ a standardized list of verbs is welcome;
- ✓ use of **English** terms;
- ✓ the format can take into account the terminology used in the labour market so as to adapt to LM needs and the needs of the learners;
- ✓ a possible structure could include description of “basic learning outcomes” and additional learning outcomes

**Other points mentioned:**

- ✓ developing a common format is considered a **political** decision;
- ✓ there is a need to identify **who** is responsible for writing and quality assuring the data, who provides and who updates these data;
- ✓ the **target group** of the common format should be clear: does it address policy level actors or end-users (students)? employers, national institutions? and how can the format support employers or other practitioners?;
- ✓ for the future: **continuous cooperation** (e.g. a digital platform for countries to work together), active communication and involvement of all stakeholders is required;
- ✓ **piloting** is necessary - a ‘niche’ approach (small providers, specific fields) was also suggested