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INVENTORY
OF NQFs 2022

CZECHIA



European Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks 2022 – Czechia

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Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	National context	1
2.1.	Policy context	1
2.2.	Qualifications frameworks' legal basis	2
3.	Policy objectives and functions	2
4.	Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications	3
4.1.	Qualifications frameworks' structure and coverage	3
4.2.	Use of learning outcomes	6
4.3.	Quality assurance arrangements	7
5.	Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement	8
6.	Recognition and validation of prior learning	9
6.1.	Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways	9
6.2.	Credit systems	9
6.3.	Recognition of foreign qualifications	9
7.	NQF implementation and impact	10
7.1.	Stage of implementation	10
7.2.	Indicating EQF levels	10
7.3.	Dissemination	10
7.4.	Qualifications databases and registers	11
7.5.	Awareness and use of frameworks	12
7.6.	Impact of frameworks	12
8.	Referencing to the EQF	13
9.	Reflections and plans	13
	Acronyms	15
	References	15
	Web pages and databases	16

1. Introduction

This report is part of the European inventory of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). Since 2009, Cedefop has carried out a systematic mapping and analysis of NQF developments in countries participating in the European qualifications framework (EQF) process. These reviews, done in close cooperation with the EQF Advisory Group, the European Commission and the European Training Foundation, have directly supported the development of operational and sustainable NQFs. The report offers a detailed description of the current state of play of the Czech qualifications system.

Czechia referenced its national qualifications system to the EQF in 2011 (NÚOV, 2011). The country has not yet decided to develop a comprehensive NQF. All qualifications awarded in secondary and higher education, as well as qualifications included in the national register of qualifications (*Národní soustava kvalifikací* (NSK)) ⁽¹⁾, are linked to EQF levels. The NSK functions as a framework for qualifications obtained through further education and as a tool for validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL), having adults as a main target group. A framework for higher education (*Rámec kvalifikací vysokoškolského vzdělávání* (RKVV)) covering qualifications provided by universities at EQF levels 6–8 was adopted in November 2018.

2. National context

2.1. Policy context

In 2020, public expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product was slightly higher than the EU average (5.1 % against 5.0 %). In 2021, tertiary educational attainment (ages 25–34) was 34.9 %, approximately 6 percentage points below the EU average. In 2020, participation in initial upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) was 70.5 %, the second highest in the EU-27 (European Commission and Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2022). At post-secondary level, only 25.2 % of learners follow a vocational pathway, while in short-cycle tertiary education vocational pathways are the only option ⁽²⁾.

In October 2020, the Strategy for the education policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+ was approved (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports,

⁽¹⁾ More information on the national register of qualifications is available on the website of the [National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic](#).

⁽²⁾ Eurostat [educ_uae_enra13], accessed 6 December 2022.

2020a). Its main strategic objectives are promoting the acquisition of competences needed for an active civic, professional and personal life and reducing inequalities in access to quality education. For the first implementation period (2020–2023), it includes priorities such as supporting pre-school education, reviewing the framework curriculum for primary and upper secondary education and providing methodical support to schools, modernising education subjects and improving the quality of education in structurally disadvantaged regions (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2020a). In June 2020, the strategic plan for higher education for the period from 2021 was approved, defining priority objectives such as developing 21st-century competences and improving the availability and relevance of flexible forms of education (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2020b). It also states that higher education institutions are expected to use the RKVV when designing curricula, when describing the graduate's profile and when developing internal systems for recognising prior learning outcomes.

2.2. Qualifications frameworks' legal basis

The NSK was introduced by Act No 179/2006 Coll. on the verification and recognition of further education results. Although the framework for higher education (RKVV) was adopted in November 2018, it has not yet been self-certified to the qualifications framework of the European higher education area (QF-EHEA). Including the RKVV in the Higher Education Act is expected to be done through an implementing regulation to the act in 2023, together with the amendment of the act (Cedefop, forthcoming). Qualifications from general education, VET, higher education and further education are regulated by three different acts ⁽³⁾.

3. Policy objectives and functions

In the absence of a comprehensive NQF, policy objectives were defined for the qualifications frameworks created at subsystem level. Setting up the NSK was to some extent motivated by a gap between the requirements of the labour market and the education and training offer, and intended to strengthen the links between initial and continuing VET (Kadlec et al., 2018). It was developed as part of the 2007 national strategy for lifelong learning (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2007), which aimed to improve access to lifelong learning and develop a

⁽³⁾ [Act No 561/2004](#) Coll. on preschool, elementary, secondary and tertiary professional and other education (Education Act); [Act No 111/1998](#) Coll. on higher education institutions; [Act No 179/2006](#) Coll. on the verification and recognition of further education results.

more permeable education and training system. The NSK supports policies in adult education for upskilling and reskilling adults.

The 2016–2020 strategic plan for higher education (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, n.d.) had as its main objectives the introduction of the RKVV and its self-certification to the QF-EHEA. The aim of the higher education framework is to increase the transparency and permeability of higher education by defining learning outcomes for qualifications at different higher education levels ⁽⁴⁾.

Developments in VET and higher education have not been coordinated or connected. Despite the efforts of the EQF national coordination point (NCP), most stakeholders and decision-makers are not convinced of the need for a comprehensive or overarching national framework or its benefits (Stalker, 2019). This leaves several challenges for developing shared concepts, improving communication and cooperation between subsystems, and opening access pathways to education programmes.

4. Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

4.1. Qualifications frameworks' structure and coverage

The NSK addresses learning outcomes acquired outside formal education and training, responding directly to the needs of the labour market. It is operational and functions as a framework for qualifications obtained through further education and as a tool for VNFIL. The NSK has eight levels and is currently populated with qualifications from EQF levels 2–7. Qualification levels in the NSK are described in terms of competences. The level descriptors of the NSK, although not divided into knowledge, skills, and responsibility and autonomy, were developed in close connection with the eight levels of the EQF and are compatible with the EQF descriptors (NÚV, 2015). They reflect the complexity of work activities. The NSK includes vocational qualifications and complete vocational qualifications. A vocational qualification (*profesní kvalifikace*) testifies the ability of a person to duly perform a task or a set of tasks within an occupation but does not cover the whole occupation. A complete vocational qualification (*úplná profesní kvalifikace*) testifies that an individual has the necessary professional competences to duly perform all tasks within an occupation (Cedefop, 2022) ⁽⁵⁾. Each NSK qualification includes a

⁽⁴⁾ More information on the [RKVV](#) (in Czech).

⁽⁵⁾ Certain vocational qualifications can be combined to obtain a complete vocational qualification and, after a final exam, can lead to an IVET qualification at EQF level 3 or 4.

qualification standard (a list of expected learning outcomes) and an assessment standard (set of evaluation criteria). They are developed by sector councils, based on the descriptions of occupations in the national system of occupations ⁽⁶⁾. Vocational qualifications could be considered a type of microcredential, as they fit the European Commission’s definition of microcredentials (Cedefop, 2023).

The learning-outcomes-based qualifications RKVV covers three levels, corresponding to levels 6–8 of the EQF. It includes academic qualifications (bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees), but excludes tertiary vocational education (DiS) degrees. Initially, it was designed to cover EQF levels 5–8. However, following a pilot implementation in 12 universities in 2015, the framework was revised and its scope was reduced. Descriptors are divided into professional knowledge, professional skills and general competences ⁽⁷⁾. They are compatible with the overarching QF-EHEA and the EQF descriptors.

A set of level descriptors for primary and secondary education (EQF levels 1–4) was also drafted in 2012, based on core curricula. In this proposal, descriptors were grouped into three categories: knowledge, specific study and work skills, and transferable skills. They are, however, not in use.

In 2013, a group of experts from education and the labour market drafted a proposal for national comprehensive descriptors, reflecting both the EQF descriptors and the existing national sectoral descriptors. This proposal was updated in 2016, but the idea for a comprehensive NQF has not been taken forward.

EQF levels help to recognise and utilise qualifications obtained in the EU, support lifelong learning and help individuals to navigate through qualification levels (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

Table 1. Czech qualification types, NSK levels and links to EQF levels

EQF level	Czech qualifications awarded in formal education and training	NSK level and qualifications (awarded through VNFIL)
8	Doctoral programme (<i>doktor</i>) – PhD degrees 3–4 years beyond master	8

⁽⁶⁾ More information on the [national system of occupations](#) (in Czech).

⁽⁷⁾ More information on the [RKVV](#) (in Czech).

EQF level	Czech qualifications awarded in formal education and training	NSK level and qualifications (awarded through VNFIL)
7	Master's programme (<i>magistr, inženýr, doktor</i>) – Mgr, MgA, Ing., Ing. arch., MUDr, MDDr, MVDr, JUDr, PhDr, RNDr, PharmDr, ThLic and ThDr degrees – 1–3 years of tertiary education beyond bachelor or 4–6 years of tertiary education	7 Head detective (<i>vedoucí detektiv</i>) Chemical specialist product manager (<i>specialista chemie produktmanažer</i>)
6	Bachelor's programme (<i>bakalář</i>) – Bc and BcA degrees – 3–4 years of tertiary education Graduation diploma – Tertiary professional education (<i>vysvědčení o absolutoriu a diplom absolventa vyšší odborné školy</i>) – DiS degree – 3–3.5 years of tertiary education Graduation diploma – Conservatoire (<i>diplom absolventa konzervatoře</i>) – DiS degree – 8 years' study after 5 years of primary education or 6 years' study after completion of a lower secondary general education programme	6 Career counsellor for educational and professional paths (<i>kariérový poradce pro vzdělávací a profesní dráhu</i>) Independent research and development electrician (<i>samostatný elektrotechnik výzkumný a vývojový pracovník</i>)
5		5 Travel guide (<i>průvodce cestovního ruchu</i>) Agricultural advisor for crop production (<i>zemědělský poradce pro rostlinnou výrobu</i>)
4	Certificate of upper secondary general education with <i>maturita</i> exam (<i>vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce</i>) – 4 years of general upper secondary study Certificate of upper secondary vocational education with <i>maturita</i> exam (<i>vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce</i>) – 4 years of vocational upper secondary study Certificate of supplementary study leading to a <i>maturita</i> exam (<i>vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce</i>) – 2 years of study after level 3 VET certificate	4 Quality management specialist in engineering (<i>technik řízení jakosti ve strojírenství</i>) Detective trainee (<i>detektiv koncipient</i>)
3	Certificate of upper secondary VET – (<i>vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce a výuční list</i>) – 3 years of upper secondary VET study	3 Glassmaker (pressed glass) (<i>sklář pro lisované sklo</i>) Locksmith (<i>zámkař</i>)

EQF level	Czech qualifications awarded in formal education and training	NSK level and qualifications (awarded through VNFIL)
2	<p>Certificate of lower secondary education (<i>vysvědčení o získání základního vzdělání</i>) – completion of a lower secondary general education programme – 9 years</p> <p>Certificate of upper secondary education with VET certificate (<i>a vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce a výuční list</i>) – 2 years of upper secondary study</p> <p>Certificate of upper secondary education without VET certificate (<i>vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce</i>) – 1- or 2-year education programme</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Production of side dishes (<i>výroba příloh</i>)</p> <p>Guard (<i>strážný</i>)</p>
1	<p>Special education – completion of an educational programme in a special school – 10 years</p>	1

NB: In the absence of a comprehensive NQF, Czechia referenced its qualifications subsystems directly to the EQF.

Sources: Adapted from NÚV (2015); the NSK and European Commission and Cedefop (2022).

4.2. Use of learning outcomes

The learning outcomes approach is widely used, although applied and interpreted slightly differently across education levels and subsystems. The 2005 Education Act introduced learning outcomes in national core curricula for all levels below tertiary. The use of learning outcomes as a starting point at all levels of the education system was one of the aims of the Strategy for Education Policy until 2020 (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2014). An [official Czech translation](#) of Cedefop's [handbook](#) on Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes was published in 2018.

Core curricula for primary and secondary education make the distinction between knowledge and skills, and emphasise key competences (learning, problem-solving, communication, social and interpersonal interaction, civic involvement and work skills) and their practical use. Expected learning outcomes are defined in terms of activities, practice oriented, usable in everyday life and verifiable (tasks that students should be able to perform). Revision of framework educational programmes in basic education is under way, and is in preparation for secondary education (Chapter 9). The aim is to define learning outcomes for more educational stages and to better focus on skills for future jobs (European Commission. Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2019).

At national level, national curricula (framework educational programmes, *rámcové vzdělávací programy*) are developed under the responsibility of the education ministry, containing the minimum requirements for state-regulated education programmes. There are 281 national VET curricula, one for each

individual field of education (VET programme). They mainly describe the learning outcomes and key competences that learners should achieve. Representatives of social partners are involved in drafting them. At local level, secondary schools design their own school educational programmes or school curricula (*školní vzdělávací programy*), based on the national curricula, in cooperation with regional social partners⁽⁸⁾. The updated national initial vocational education and training (IVET) curricula were launched by the education ministry in September 2020. These updates refer to their vocational component, linking them to the NSK vocational qualifications (Cedefop, 2022).

In higher education, each study programme has a 'graduate profile' (general programme description)⁽⁹⁾ and programme goals, described in terms of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are defined as professional knowledge, professional skills and general competences that graduates should be able to demonstrate on completion of a specific learning phase. Knowledge and skills are subject specific, while competences are more general: they include judgment, communication ability (including in foreign languages) and preparation for continuing learning. The use of professional knowledge and skills in a particular context, with a particular degree of autonomy and responsibility, is described as a competence (NÚV, 2015). The National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education recommends that higher education institutions structure learning outcomes in this way, and it is intended that the qualifications framework for higher education will be used in the accreditation process (Cedefop, 2016).

4.3. Quality assurance arrangements

The Czech School Inspectorate acts as external evaluator for primary and secondary education and tertiary vocational schools. In 2015, the inspectorate defined how to perform quality assurance at schools and published a guide on it (school quality model). The criteria introduced are grouped in six main areas, including pedagogical leadership, quality of the pedagogical staff, educational process and learners' learning outcomes. The criteria are used not only by the inspectorate but also for the self-evaluation of schools. Every school year, an updated set of criteria, based on the six criteria of the guide, is published for schools' reference (Cedefop, 2022).

Approval of programmes in tertiary education is the responsibility of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (university sector) and the

⁽⁸⁾ Cooperation of schools with employers in curriculum design, practical training, final examinations and placements for teaching staff was made mandatory through a 2018 amendment of the Education Act (Cedefop and ReferNet Czechia, 2020).

⁽⁹⁾ More information in [Government Regulation No. 274/2016 Coll.](#)

Accreditation Commission for Tertiary Vocational Education (tertiary vocational sector). Higher education institutions can apply for institutional accreditation alongside programme accreditation. Individual institutions at all levels of education and training are also required by law to have internal quality assurance systems in place (NÚV, 2015).

5. Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The EQF NCP has been operational since 2009. Since January 2020, the EQF NCP has been hosted by the National Pedagogical Institute (NPI). The EQF NCP played an important role in referencing the Czech qualifications system to the EQF, a process for which the education ministry ⁽¹⁰⁾ had overall responsibility. It has also led discussions on establishing a comprehensive NQF, and provides and disseminates information on European tools. As a comprehensive NQF has not been put in place, there are no specific human or financial resources available for an NQF secretariat (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

Regarding the NSK, the 2007 act on the verification and recognition of further education results set out the basic responsibilities, powers and rights of all stakeholders in developing and awarding vocational and complete vocational qualifications. The education ministry coordinates the activities of authorising bodies, and approves, modifies and issues a list of vocational and complete vocational qualifications. The National Council for Qualifications acts as an advisory body to the ministry. The NPI is responsible for maintaining the NSK. Sector councils oversee the development of qualification and assessment standards for NSK qualifications ⁽¹¹⁾. There are 28 sector councils consisting of representatives of primarily employers and employees, qualification authorities and academic sectors (Cedefop, 2022). The labour ministry ⁽¹²⁾ has been developing the national system of occupations, which is closely linked with the NSK.

Over the past 15 years there has been a transfer of powers and responsibilities to the local level. Cooperation among central government, regional government, social partners (especially employers) and parents is important. The

⁽¹⁰⁾ The official title is [Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports](#).

⁽¹¹⁾ At higher levels, sector councils define only specialised supplementary qualifications, not those awarded by higher education institutions (bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees).

⁽¹²⁾ The official title is [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs](#).

involvement of employers is strongest in VET, where they take part in the formulation of national curricula and in the work-based training of students.

6. Recognition and validation of prior learning

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

The system of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) addresses primarily the continuing vocational education and training sector, with the NSK as its main tool. Validation and recognition procedures are in place for all qualifications included in the NSK, aimed at increasing adults' employability and mitigating skill shortages on the labour market. The system, although to some extent connected to the formal education system, works mainly in parallel with it, without covering general and higher education (Stalker, 2019).

Assessment of knowledge, skills and competences gained by prior learning and work experience is carried out according to the qualifications and assessment standards included in the NSK. The assessment is competence based, usually consisting of an oral examination, a written paper and a practical demonstration of skills and competences. Certain vocational qualifications can be combined to obtain a complete vocational qualification and, after a final exam, can lead to an IVET qualification (Stalker, 2019). Fifteen qualifications at EQF level 2 and 71 IVET qualifications at EQF level 3 can be obtained in this way, which is a bridge between VNFIL and formal VET. Forty-nine vocational qualifications included in the NSK at EQF level 4 and obtained through VNFIL can be recognised as the vocational part of the *maturita* exam, leading to the certificate of upper secondary vocational education with *maturita* exam; the standardised part of the *maturita* exam (Czech language, foreign language or maths) must be passed as well.

6.2. Credit systems

No credit system is used in VET. The European credit transfer and accumulation system is used in higher education, although it is not linked to validation arrangements.

6.3. Recognition of foreign qualifications

The EQF helps recognise qualifications obtained in the EU. For instance, within the legal framework of the Education Act, recognition authorities use EQF levels to facilitate the recognition process (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

7. NQF implementation and impact

7.1. Stage of implementation

Czechia does not have a comprehensive NQF in place. NQF implementation is at an exploratory stage. Nevertheless, the NSK is at the operational stage. Work on qualifications has been carried out at subsystem level.

7.2. Indicating EQF levels

Since 2011, EQF levels have been indicated on all qualifications included in the NSK. Since 2017, they are also indicated on all general education and initial VET qualifications, as well as on those awarded by tertiary vocational schools and conservatoires ⁽¹³⁾. Indicating EQF levels on higher education qualifications is not obligatory for higher education institutions but many of them do so. EQF levels have been indicated on Europass certificate supplements (general education, IVET and NSK qualifications) and on all diploma supplements for tertiary vocational qualifications. EQF levels are indicated on diploma supplements for some higher education qualifications. Higher education and tertiary vocational qualifications are not included in databases (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020, 2022).

7.3. Dissemination

The NPI has been disseminating information about the EQF through websites ⁽¹⁴⁾, and presentations at seminars, conferences, workshops, and education and job fairs (e.g. Profesia and Gaudeamus). At events such as job fairs, the aim is to reach individual users, helping them to understand what the EQF level of their qualification is and how to use it in creating a CV. To enhance the EQF's social outreach, the country has developed infographics, leaflets and a video ⁽¹⁵⁾, and uses newsletters and social media to a considerable extent. The NPI has created a client centre service for Europass and EQF tools ⁽¹⁶⁾, providing information by email and telephone. End users contact the centre mostly about work and study mobility, transparency and recognition of national qualifications, and the use of Europass supplements.

⁽¹³⁾ In accordance with Decree No 3/2015 Coll. on certain documents in education.

⁽¹⁴⁾ A dedicated [EQF web page](#) exists, but more information can also be found through the [national register of qualifications](#) and through the information system [infoabsolvent](#) (all in Czech).

⁽¹⁵⁾ More information in an [EQF infographic](#) and an [information video on the EQF](#) (both in Czech).

⁽¹⁶⁾ More information about the [EQF/Europass client centre](#) (in Czech).

The main groups targeted have been policymakers and decision-makers, experts in the different education sectors, teachers, career counsellors, learners and employers. While most actions target all stakeholders, the education ministry has issued a newsletter specifically for guidance and counselling practitioners, quality assurance bodies and recognition authorities. Regional seminars target education and training providers. The communication approach emphasises information on the practical use of EQF levels by showcasing documents where the EQF is mentioned, such as certificates and Europass certificate supplements (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

7.4. Qualifications databases and registers

The NSK contains 1 450 vocational qualifications in 27 different sectors, ranging between EQF/NQF levels 2 and 7, with most at levels 3 and 4 (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020, 2022), and 212 complete vocational qualifications (Cedefop, 2022). For each qualification, a qualification standard and an assessment standard are included. The NSK targets employers, employees, learners, education and training providers, and policymakers, providing information in Czech and English. It is interconnected with the national system of occupations through a single central database of competences ⁽¹⁷⁾, with the new education and work portal ⁽¹⁸⁾ and with the Europass platform (via the Qualifications Dataset Register).

The Europass certificate supplement database ⁽¹⁹⁾ provides supplements for formal upper secondary qualifications (EQF levels 2–4), targeting employers, employees, learners, education and training providers, and policymakers. It includes 335 qualifications and offers information in Czech, English and German. It is interconnected with the Europass platform.

The NSK and the Europass certificate supplement database record the following information for each qualification: title, field of study, EQF level, a description of the qualification, a reference to corresponding occupations, information on authorising body and internal quality assurance process. The criteria that need to be respected in competence descriptions of NSK qualifications are stated in a relevant methodology: each competence should be traceable, measurable and trainable (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

⁽¹⁷⁾ [Central database of competences](#) (in Czech).

⁽¹⁸⁾ More information on the [education and work portal](#) (beta version) (in Czech).

⁽¹⁹⁾ [ECS database – ECS database Europass Certificate Supplement in the Czech Republic](#).

There is also a national register of higher education institutions and accredited study programmes ⁽²⁰⁾.

7.5. Awareness and use of frameworks

The NSK is the main tool used in VNFIL. For instance, to obtain a vocational qualification, applicants need to demonstrate all competences listed in the qualification standard included in the NSK. According to Stalker (2019), the country's validation system has showcased some impressive results regarding the number of newly developed NSK (comprehensive) vocational qualifications (enabling recognition of prior learning in more fields). Since 2009, when this process was launched, more than 250 000 exams have been held (August 2021) (Cedefop, 2022).

NSK qualification and assessment standards are used in developing non-formal training programmes. The updated (2020) national IVET curricula were linked to NSK vocational qualifications (Cedefop, 2022).

7.6. Impact of frameworks

The NSK has significantly supported the country's VNFIL system (see Section 6.1). Referencing the national qualifications subsystems directly to the EQF levels has improved the transparency and comparability of qualifications, including those awarded outside the regulated national qualification system. The comparability of qualifications obtained through formal education and the NSK system enables the recognition of vocational qualifications, which can potentially lead to a complete vocational qualification. Those obtaining a complete NSK vocational qualification can sit a *maturita* or *absolutorium* ⁽²¹⁾ exam and achieve the relevant certification without attending the corresponding study programme. Thus, links between the formal and non-formal subsystems are reinforced, reducing traditional barriers, while parity of esteem between different types of education, training and qualifications is also promoted. Nevertheless, more needs to be done in these areas. The consistent and credible use of learning outcomes in the development of formal education programmes, and in NSK qualification and assessment standards, has promoted the transparency of qualifications. It is also an underlying principle of assuring the quality of qualifications; for instance, learning outcomes are used in developing the uniform assignments of the final exams at EQF levels 2 and 3 and the common part of the *maturita* exam (EQF level 4).

⁽²⁰⁾ [National register of higher education institutions and accredited study programmes](#) (in Czech).

⁽²¹⁾ *Absolutorium* is an exam taken by students at conservatoires.

8. Referencing to the EQF

Czechia referenced its national qualifications subsystems directly to the EQF levels in December 2011. Formal qualifications from secondary education were referenced based on the classification of educational qualification types and nationally approved curricula. Continuing VET/VET qualifications awarded through VNFIL are included in the NSK; its eight levels were also referenced to the eight EQF levels. Qualifications from tertiary vocational education and higher education were linked to the EQF based on characteristics of the different levels of tertiary education set out in national legislation (NÚV, 2015). The initial referencing report (NÚOV, 2011) was approved through Cabinet decision 557/2011, and updated in 2013 and 2015 following minor changes in legislation. The framework for higher education has not yet been self-certified against the QF-EHEA.

9. Reflections and plans

The NSK and its online database are operational and are being used for upskilling and reskilling adults and for VNFIL. A strong policy rationale underpinning the VNFIL strategy could be considered one success factor in the implementation of the NSK. Partnership between the education sector, qualification management and employers, within the sector skills councils, has been leveraged to define skills shortages in the labour market and utilise the VNFIL system to mitigate them (Stalker, 2019).

A commitment has been made to introduce the learning outcomes approach in all subsystems of education and training. Competences in the NSK have been gradually used as a source of information for educational programmes in initial VET.

In line with the Strategy for the education policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+, revisions of framework educational programmes in primary and lower secondary education are being developed. Revisions of the comprehensive education component of framework curricula for upper secondary vocational education will follow, linked to those in primary and lower secondary education. Revisions promote the competence-based model and emphasise the need to develop learners' competences for active civic, professional and personal life. The revised framework curricula will include the option to link school curricula with the NSK. The country is also reforming the system of subjects in upper secondary and post-secondary VET, aiming to make it clearer and simpler and to define the appropriate fields of study that will enable learners to address 21st-century challenges. Employer organisations and representatives of the business

community will be involved in this process. In higher education, the use of the RKVV by institutions is expected to be encouraged, for instance in curriculum design and in the development of internal systems for recognising prior learning.

Work on qualifications has been carried out at subsystem level to varying degrees. However, the importance of increased interconnectedness between various parts of the education system and the need to establish links between different education pathways have been acknowledged (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2014). Thus, the question remains whether a comprehensive NQF could help coordinate and bridge different subsystems, further promote transparency and comparability of qualifications, and enhance parity of esteem between different types of qualifications. Explicit levels and a single set of descriptors would make links to EQF levels more transparent. Discussions on the purpose and potential advantages of an NQF have been held, along with work by experts, but reaching political agreement among stakeholders remains a challenge.

Acronyms

DiS	tertiary vocational education (<i>Diplomovaný specialista</i>)
EQF	European qualifications framework
IVET	initial vocational education and training
NCP	national coordination point
NPI	National Pedagogical Institute
NQF	national qualifications framework
NSK	national register of qualifications (<i>Národní soustava kvalifikací</i>)
QF-EHEA	qualifications framework of the European higher education area
RKVV	framework for higher education (<i>Rámcová kvalifikační soustava vysokoškolského vzdělávání</i>)
VET	vocational education and training
VNFIL	validation of non-formal and informal learning

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