

# The role of NQFs in the Union of Skills

## *Your perspective matters!*

### Workshop

17 February 2026  10.00-12.00 CET

The [workshop](#) will provide policymakers, stakeholders, experts, researchers, social partners and the wider public with an opportunity to discuss the role that national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) can play in the Union of Skills. Participants will exchange views on how NQFs can better promote the portability of qualifications and skills, responding to the needs of all people.

### Policy background

For over 15 years, the European qualifications framework (EQF) and NQFs have played a pivotal role in promoting transparency, comparability, and portability of qualifications across European countries. The [Union of Skills](#), launched in early 2025, has kept skills and qualifications at the core of EU policies. This initiative aims to accelerate efforts to address skill shortages, promote lifelong learning, support the recognition of qualifications across borders and value competences regardless of where and how they were acquired. Learning-outcomes-based NQFs and the EQF are already actively contributing to greater visibility, recognition and trust in qualifications and skills. Further, NQFs can help unlock the single market's full potential by increasing the cross-border portability of qualifications and skills, strengthening links and communication between education and work, and enabling the EU to become a more attractive destination for third-country talent.

### Workshop objectives

The workshop aims to provide a platform for an interactive discussion among stakeholders from all European countries. Workshop participants will, through three parallel breakout sessions, reflect on key topics related to the potential function of NQFs within the Union of Skills and share their views on how to ensure that NQFs contribute to achieving the goals of this initiative. Cedefop also aims to collect reflections and ideas that will contribute to shaping its future work and research, including the 2026 update of the [European inventory of NQFs](#) and of the [NQF online tool](#).

### Working methods

The workshop will take place online on Zoom. In the plenary, participants will attend brief presentations, contributing to the discussion through the chat and Slido. The breakout sessions will make up the main part of the workshop, where participants can select a theme of their choice. They will compare national experiences, share their views on key topics related to qualifications transparency and portability, and support the ongoing European cooperation on EQF/NQF implementation. There will be three parallel breakout sessions.



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Online

## Breakout session 1 – Increasing awareness and use of NQFs among citizens

### Key questions:

- To what extent are learners, workers, employers, and education and training providers aware of NQFs? How often do they use them?
- How can the use of NQFs be increased among learners, workers, employers, and education and training providers?
- How can NQFs contribute to promoting the portability of qualifications and skills, facilitating lifelong learning and improving mobility in the labour market and across borders?

## Breakout session 2 – The use of NQFs in recognition procedures

### Key questions:

- How do NQFs support recognition procedures of foreign qualifications (EU and non-EU) in your country? Are there any online tools that aim to make the comparison of qualifications easier in your country?
- What are the enabling factors that facilitate the use of NQFs in recognition procedures and what are the challenges in recognising foreign qualifications?
- What should be done to increase the role of NQFs in recognition procedures?

## Breakout session 3 – NQFs and the digital transition

### Key questions:

- With rising interest in digital interoperability across education and labour market services, to what extent and how can NQFs and qualifications databases support this process?
- What is the relationship between NQF databases/registers and digital credentials?
- What is the role of skills taxonomies in linking education and labour market data, and where do the main challenges lie?



# Programme

17 February 2026 (all times are CET)

9.45 – 10.00	Platform access and technical check		
10:00 – 10.05	<b>Welcome and introduction</b> <i>Irene Mandl, Head of Department for VET and Qualifications (DVQ), Cedefop</i>		
10.05 – 10.25	<b>Opening remarks</b> Chair: <i>Irene Mandl, Head of DVQ, Cedefop</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Koen Nomden</b>, Team leader of 'Transparency and portability of skills and qualifications', Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs &amp; Inclusion, European Commission</li><li>▪ <b>Iraklis Pliakis</b>, Expert in qualifications and credentials/Future of VET, Cedefop</li></ul>		
10.25 – 11.40	<b>Parallel breakout sessions</b>		
	<b>Topic 1</b> <b>Increasing awareness and use of NQFs among citizens</b>	<b>Topic 2</b> <b>The use of NQFs in recognition procedures</b>	<b>Topic 3</b> <b>NQFs and the digital transition</b>
	Moderator: <i>Iraklis Pliakis, Expert in qualifications and credentials/Future of VET</i>	Moderator: <i>Vasileios Symeonidis, Expert in qualifications and credentials/Future of VET/key competences</i>	Moderator: <i>Zelda Azzarà, Expert in qualifications and credentials</i>
	<b>Panellists:</b>	<b>Speakers:</b>	<b>Speakers:</b>
	<b>Brikena Xhomaqi</b> , <i>Director of The Lifelong Learning Platform – European Civil Society for Education (LLLPE)</i>	<b>Órla Barry</b> , <i>Head of Qualifications Information and Learning Opportunities, QQI</i>	<b>Tiina Polo</b> , <i>Senior Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Education and Culture – Finland</i>
	<b>Thomas Wimmesberger</b> , <i>Eurochambres – Director of European Education and Employment Policy, German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK)</i>	<b>Julieta Vergara</b> , <i>Foreign Credential Evaluator, Department of Skills Supply, Swedish Council for Higher Education</i>	<b>Dr. Emilia Danowska</b> , <i>Educational Research Institute, Poland</i> <b>Dr. Wojciech Stęchły</b> , <i>Educational Research Institute, Poland</i>



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Online

11.40 – 11.55

## Reporting from breakout sessions

Chair: Iraklis Pliakis, Expert in qualifications and credentials/Future of VET, Cedefop

### Rapporteurs

- **Anastasia Pouliou**, Expert in qualifications and credentials/Future of VET
- **Aristos Theocharous**, Expert in qualifications and credentials/IVET mobility scoreboard/VET policies and systems
- **Vicky Oraiopoulou**, Policy officer in VET policies and systems/Qualifications and credentials

11.55 – 12.00

## Concluding remarks and work ahead

To join the conversation online, please tag [Cedefop](#) and use [#NQFs](#)

Follow us on social media:



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Online