



Guidelines for EQF adaptation¹

Principles of proper EQF assignment
Optimum model of EQF assigned occupational profiles,
curricula and assessment procedures

Deliverable:

81

Version:

03

WP:

3, 4, 5, 7

Last update:

August 2011

Prepared by:

DEKRA (based on the work of IG Metall, CPV, CREDIJ)

With contributions from:

- IG Metall (DE),
- CPV (IT),
- CREDIJ (FR),
- 3srl (AT),
- IBW (AT),
- OEEK (HE),
- FLM (ES),
- ACPART (RO)
- Terry Hook (UK)

For further information on the project please consult:

www.project-predict.eu

For further information on the paper please contact:

Gerald Thiel or Claudia Ball



"This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

¹ Please note, these guidelines equal the optimum models and principles developed in the framework of WP 3-5. This results from the change of the methodological approach applied within WP 3-5 that led to the development and evaluation of these models (that were only planned for WP 7) already. It has been agreed that it would not be useful to develop additional guidelines because the models are already the „Guidelines of EQF adaptation“.



Principles of proper EQF assignment

Optimum models of EQF assignment

The *sequence of optimum models of EQF assignment* was elaborated on the basis of a comparison of partially strongly differing approaches to prepare, carry out, and assess (vocational) education, according to national/sectoral traditions of various origin. For this purpose, contributions of project partners were collected which delivered necessary information about the situation in the partner countries, but also some studies dealing with the above mentioned key educational elements were evaluated.

The objective of this work was to create optimum models for the EQF assignment of key educational elements, using the experience of various countries/sectors with establishing and maintaining educational systems before the introduction of the EQF, but also in the course of the EQF debates.

The following assumptions were made on the basis of the review:

- There is no undoubtable, single way to reference national/sectoral educational systems to the EQF.
- This delivers space for various understandings, often following the specific interests of stakeholders.
- This is not a good starting point for the development of "zones of mutual trust"; it is therefore important to get to a *common understanding of issues crucial for EQF assignment* which exceeds the very generic level of assigning qualifications to EQF levels.
- This could be achieved by an agreement on *principles of assigning educational key elements to the EQF*.

These principles, referring to the above mentioned sequence of optimum models, shall be described in the following.

Principles of proper EQF assignment

1. Interrelations between different key education elements and the consequences resulting from these interrelations when assigning one of them to the EQF

There are three key educational elements which are considered crucial for EQF assignment:

- Occupational profiles
- Curricula
- Assessment and quality assurance procedures

It is obvious that these elements should not be dealt with separately; they are closely related to each other. Therefore the first requirement of proper EQF assignment is to provide for *accordance of these elements with regard to EQF reference*. It makes no sense if one element is adapted to the EQF without reflection about the consequences for other elements which are linked to it:

- Curricula intended to lead to a qualification should agree with the occupational profile which describes the profession which the qualification refers to.

- Assessment and quality assurance measures refer to performance and results of training and education. It is therefore self-evident that their features have to mirror the EQF orientation of curricula and occupational profiles.²

2. A holistic view on the work process as the starting point for EQF application

This common EQF orientation of educational key elements is based on a common objective which has existed long ago before the EQF was invented: Training and education is no end in itself, but serve goals of the individuals which, as a rule, are situated *beyond* learning. *Occupational profiles* reflect that it is *work* for which learning processes shall enable, but there are, of course, other issues which play a role in this context: *scientific interests, citizenship, ethical questions*, and all issues which can be considered moments of *individual development*.

These “soft” objectives are sometimes understood to contradict to *fitness for the labour market* as a goal of training and education, but this is not necessarily the case: Within *work, individual development* is not excluded, but takes place, taking in account *ethical issues and citizenship's requirements*, and might even refer to *science* which is also a kind of work.

A *holistic view* on the work process should therefore be the starting point for designing educational key elements and determining the reference to the EQF. This should not be understood as a plea for some overall approach which does not clearly determine what in detail is considered; it should deliver a systematic view on the work process as a set of actions carried out by individuals in a context structured according to the expected results of work. This includes and does not prevent a functional view on work, and at the same it prevents a “freezing” of partial work processes from which sets of learning outcomes are derived that have to be replaced at short notice due to technical progress: According to the *function* of partial work processes in relationship to the *goals* of work they will be not in an empirical, but *conceptual way*.

3. Determining learning outcomes in a holistic way vs. fragmentation through learning outcome orientation

Learning outcomes have from the very beginning of EQF implementation been considered crucial: If national educational systems shall be judged which differ considerably in terms of organisation, structure, and generally in the way how they deal with educational content, learning outcomes deliver the only criterion which makes systems *comparable*. This pragmatic issue, however, should not disguise that since years there has been a strong tendency to learning outcome orientation of educational key elements *intrinsically* motivated by needs of various national educational systems, EQF implementation has only strengthened this trend, not originally caused it.

The reason for this is certainly the growing *request to make educational systems fit to agree to the needs of the labour market*, and it is not a secret that the specific position of the demand side has influenced the way how requests were formulated, and how this – at least to a certain extent – has been mirrored in design and use of educational key elements. Following the argumentation above, there is no need to reduce work processes to lists of separately taking place operations, and the *abilities* to carry out work processes should analogously not be understood as learning outcomes to be introduced into occupational profiles, curricula, and assessment/quality assurance procedures without reflection on their systematic coherence.

In order to *avoid fragmentation of learning outcomes* (which in some educational contexts already has become a reality), and at the same time to make sure that *changing requirements coming from outside educational systems*

² For example, it makes no sense if a curriculum shall provide for learning outcomes described in terms of abilities, and assessment only checks knowledge.

can always smoothly be considered, it should therefore be reflected how learning outcomes can be described in a way which brings the available anchoring points of the EQF – *knowledge, skills, and competence* – in a systematic order which overcomes all ambiguities and delivers guarantees for the sustainability of occupational profiles, curricula, assessment and quality assurance measures without the necessity to change these elements totally according to changes in the (mostly technical) change of the art: Learning outcomes should encompass the ability to adapt work processes to these changes.

This exceeds the mere appeal to leave input orientation of educational key elements in favour of learning outcome orientation. It is demanded that learning outcomes are determined in a holistic way, according to the model which is suggested for the understanding of the work process.

4. Developing trust in learning outcomes achieved outside the institutional context of certifying bodies

Following the first debates about the EQF, this framework was *not* planned to be an instrument of educational reform, but a *translation machine* which shall allow stakeholders all over Europe to judge properly (and to measure against the own background) what learning outcomes have been achieved by learners coming from abroad. It was explicitly said that the introduction of the EQF would not touch the autonomy of member states to determine themselves how their educational systems should look like.

This is only true in a formal sense. There was, of course, no EU directive to which national law had to be adapted as this is the case in other fields of policy. The introduction of the EQF, however, caused reaction in national fields which already becomes visible by the establishment resp. update of national frameworks related to the EQF and the debates which are connected to these processes: It can be easily grasped that this sometimes leads to a renewal of or even to a launch of reform discussions, especially there where the EQF discussion makes visible that there are some *gaps in the own system*.

Among others, this concerns the topics *recognition of prior, non-formal, and informal learning*. Mechanisms to assess these learning results exist, but in many countries they are not very popular, at least as far this concerns bodies currently responsible for certification. Ways have to be shown how trust in learning results can be ensured that have not been achieved in the institutional context of certifying bodies; this has to be reflected when the EQF assignment of educational key elements is discussed.

5. The role of stakeholders and their specific interests and positions

There is a common understanding that the *involvement of stakeholders* into the process of setting up and maintaining educational systems has a positive influence on the quality of training and education. Success stories, mostly dealing with the common activities of *social partners*, are sometimes considered to be useable as models which can be easily transferred to countries where comparable structures of collaboration in the field do not (yet) exist.

In this context, it should not be forgotten that success is always dependent on the specific content of the agreement which can be achieved among stakeholders, and that it cannot be taken for granted that this always fits to 100% the needs of all involved parties: Not only social partners (organisations of entrepreneurs and trade unions), but also individuals and single enterprises as well as public and private educational bodies can claim interests, and it is not clear from the very beginning that the result of negotiations between politically acting stakeholders will cover all needs: This works only if the basic common understanding can be achieved that, at least in the long run, the needs of all interested parties are covered if the interests of individuals - to be flexible to fulfil the requirements of various work places - , and the interests of enterprises - to get a workforce able to match

their specific requirements as soon as possible – are integrated into an overarching model as it was suggested above.

This might be difficult if there is no rough idea how this “focal point” of common interest (as “profession” in central Europe) could look like. But even if there is some tradition of common understanding, the involvement of stakeholders always leads to some *political compromise* which is certainly not oriented to conceptual reflections, but to protection or extension of acquired position.

This influences, of course, not only the behaviour of stakeholders *within a national environment*, but also *within their relationships to stakeholders abroad*, in particular during the currently taking place NQF/SQF/EQF debates. There should be found ways how can be made sure that this kind of thinking does not threaten the whole EQF implementation process.



Occupational standards/ profiles/ Legal regulations An optimum model

Occupational profiles/ standards

The term occupational standard refers to occupation or qualification profiles, i.e. any form of official description of qualification / job profiles. It was chosen since it is a broad definition that takes into account the different countries' traditions of describing occupational profiles.

European countries vary strongly regarding their application of occupational standards³. The countries examined are characterised by strong differences in their tradition of describing occupational standards. The differences identified are found in: (1) the role of description of occupational standards, i.e. do they have an impact on the design of training programmes; (2) degree and extent of official descriptions ranging from highly standardised systems such as are found in Germany and Austria to highly flexible systems where there is no official description of occupational and educational standards; (3) form of description of national occupational standards, including the extent of official description of learning outcomes, referencing to work processes etc; (4) the referencing of occupational and qualification standards to qualifications frameworks or other official referencing tools.

From the projects findings occupational profiles or equivalent instruments are necessary to ensure proper EQF application. Such an instrument ideally covers the following elements for EQF adaptation:

- Title and definition of the occupation or specialisation
- Description of the work processes that specify the occupation or specialisation
- Required abilities expressed in the EQF descriptors knowledge, skills and competencies
- Education and training pathways related to this occupation
- Indications on the assessment of the required abilities

Diving into principles and points of action of EQF-adapted occupational profiles

This part of the optimum model of EQF-adapted occupational profiles further elaborates the points of action and the general principles in EQF assignment outlined before. It highlights the crucial points of action and reflects them in terms of the postulated principals for proper EQF assignment.

Description/Identification of the work processes that specify the occupation or specialisation

The development process of this point of action is one of the crucial steps to ensure a profile's orientation towards work and business processes. Two aspects have to be considered

(1) Application of scientific methods for work analysis⁴

Different approaches are applied in practice to analyse work based on scientific methods. These methods range from interviews with expert workers, to observations of the actual work process, to large

³ cp. CEDEFOP (2009). *The dynamics of qualifications: Defining and renewing occupational and educational standards*. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/5053.aspx>

⁴ cp: CEDEFOP (2004). *European perspectives on learning at work*. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3033_en.pdf and CEDEFOP (2009). *The dynamics of qualifications*. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/5053.aspx>

scale surveys. The elements that were identified as being of major importance for EQF-adaptation are an objective and transparent approach when analysing work and an approach likewise referring to up-to-date work requirements and future skill needs.

(2) Participation of stakeholders⁵

Stakeholder involvement is an integral part of this optimum model in order to ensure relevance of the occupation and the link between labour market and education. A challenge to be mastered within this optimum model are nevertheless additional interests stakeholders have in qualifications such as classification into different wage groups when it comes to EQF-adaptation⁶ because those jeopardise objectivity and neutrality of the process and can have a strong influence on the assignment of qualifications to an NQF level.

It can be concluded that in an optimum model of EQF-adaptation the description of profession has to be based on participative trans-disciplinary research rather than on negotiation processes between stakeholders. This conclusion applies likewise to all following elements of occupational profiles.

Required abilities expressed in the EQF descriptors knowledge, skills and competencies

The process of developing EQF descriptors and the actual phrasing of these descriptions is of relevance within this point of action. These steps directly build on the analysis of work discussed above and inherit the same principles as outlined in the principles of proper EQF assignment.

The *process of developing EQF descriptors* and transferring them into occupational profiles can follow steps such as the following⁷:

(1) Identification of work and business processes

The basis for the formulation of learning outcomes is the identification of work and business processes that can be assigned to a certain profession. The required abilities are always related to occupation-typical work and business processes.

(2) Partition of fields of activity

The occupation profile is structured into fields of activity which are based on the work and business processes identified in step 1. (See an example from the European core occupation Car Mechatronic in the annex to occupational profiles.)

(3) Definition of learning outcomes related to the fields of activity

After the partition of fields of activity, learning outcomes are determined for each field of activity. These are formulated in an outcome-oriented manner (see also below).

(4) Transferring the fields of activity and learning outcomes into the occupational profile

The re-formulated fields of activity and learning outcomes are transferred into an occupational profile/standard that sets the different partitions in the framework of the overall profession.

Step (2) on partitioning the fields of activity plays a crucial role regarding recognition of prior learning/ learning that took place in- and non-formal learning situations because it allows the assessment and recognition of a specific set of learning outcomes within an occupational profile. For an optimum model it is even desirable to structure these sets in a way that allows the assignment of selected sets to more than one profile such as partitions that refer to basic work and business process that can lead to different occupations. Nevertheless the holistic understanding of a profession has to remain and partitions of the field to activity have to be assigned to a certain occupational profile which is itself assigned to a specific NQF/EQF level.

⁵ cp: CEDEFOP (2009). *The dynamics of qualifications*. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/5053.aspx>

⁶ cp: CEDEFOP (2009). *The dynamics of qualifications*. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/5053.aspx>

⁷ based on Hensge, K., Lorig, B. & Schreiber, D. (2009). *Kompetenzstandards in der Berufsausbildung – Abschlussbericht*. http://www2.bibb.de/tools/fodb/pdf/eb_43201.pdf

Within this overall process of developing and transferring learning outcomes the relation to work and business processes must be ensured.

The actual *phrasing of the learning outcomes* (see step 3 above) follows the EQF descriptors definition in an optimum model of EQF-adaptation. This means learning outcomes⁸ are described in

- Knowledge *“means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual”*
- Skills *“means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)”*
- “Competences” *means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy”*

Please find an example for these descriptors below. It is based on the qualification “master craftsman in motor vehicle mechanics” adapted for Austria⁹:

	Knowledge	Skills	Competences
Unit 1: Inspection of a motor vehicle (incl. motorcycles and lorries) and its systems			
He/she is able to inspect the electrical system of a motor vehicle (incl. motorcycles and lorries) and trailer.	He/she has knowledge in the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circuit diagrams and repair instructions • Diagnostic and measurement devices • Regulations on the inspection of electrical and electronic systems • etc. 	He/she is able to ... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read and apply circuit diagrams and repair instructions. • correctly connect and use measurement and diagnostic devices. • correctly assess and apply measurement results. • 	He/she acts independently and on his/her own responsibility or has ultimate responsibility if he/she delegates this work to a team he/she heads or to employees.
etc.			

Education and training pathways related to this occupation

In order to implement the principle of openness to recognition of prior/ in- and non-formal learning the education and training path to acquire the learning outcomes as defined above may not be limited to a specific training scheme and has to be open for the option that relevant learning outcomes assigned to a specific occupation can also be acquired partially or totally through unknown learning paths. In an optimum model this should explicitly be included.

Indications on the assessment of the required abilities

Assessment procedures as well as access to assessment need to be regulated in a way that they likewise allow the assessment of learning that took place in formal as well as in in-/non-formal settings.

Assessment criteria should e.g. be structured into fields of assessment which directly relate to the fields of activity defined before. The same applies for assessment procedures in order to allow the assessment and recognition of

⁸ see *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council from 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning, Annex I.*

⁹ example taken from the results of the ZOOM project www.zoom-efq.eu, further examples for Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece and Slovenia are available from this project and on the website as well

in- and non-formal learning that represents only parts of the learning outcomes assigned to the occupational profile.

Annex occupational profiles: Identification of learning fields for the Car Mechatronic based on work and business processes

This example is taken from the European core occupation Car Mechatronic¹⁰ and provides an example of the partition of fields of activity based on the identification of work and business processes.

Learning area (fields of activity)	Fields of activity and tasks
Orientation and overview knowledge	Learning area 1: The car: the basic service <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standard service 2. Repair of basic wear and tear 3. Vehicle care 4. Administrative services
Comprehensive system knowledge	Learning area 2: The car and its architecture: services and supplementary installations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standard default extension and supplementary installations 1. Main inspection including summer, winter and holiday check-ups 2. Service tasks (emission control, periodical inspection)
Detailed and functional knowledge	Learning area 3: The car and its components: fault diagnosis and repair <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repair of faults (chassis, body, steering ...) 2. Trouble shooting and repair 3. Special extensions and supplementary installations 4. Repair of aggregates and components
Specialized advanced knowledge	Learning area 4: The car and its construction: expert diagnosis and repair <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special diagnosis and repair 2. Repair of collision damages 3. Claims 4. Checking measures in systems – alternatives

These four vertical learning areas are filled with fields of tasks for skilled work, the key work tasks. The 15 key work tasks become objects of the competence development process. They may be understood as the “content dimensions” of a work process oriented curriculum.

¹⁰ “Car Mechatronic” – An Open Approach for Designing a New European Core Occupational Profile, Georg Spöttl



Curricula/ Educational content An optimum model

Curricula

Curricula are often understood as key instruments in adapting education and training to changing requirements¹¹. This is certainly true if curricula are not considered separately, but in connection with instruments to identify and determine *work requirements*, and with *assessment procedures* which are based on these statements. With regard to the EQF, curricula actually only play a secondary role: The “classical” user of the EQF wants to know what an individual is able to do within work processes, and he is *not* interested in the *way how these abilities were acquired*.

Curricula describe ways how this happens within *institutionalised learning sequences*, but this is not the only possibility how abilities can be developed: They might also be the outcome of *non-formal* and *informal learning*; this is explicitly mentioned in the relevant EQF document.

Nevertheless, the majority of qualification processes still takes places on the basis of curricula, and if we reflect how the learning outcomes defined in EQF categories can be best achieved, it is certainly sensible to consider how curricula can *facilitate* this:

- First and utmost, curricula should include a description of these *learning* to be achieved *outcomes* (which have to be derived from work processes), and they should clarify *how* learning sequences foreseen in the curriculum contribute to achieving these learning outcomes.
- It should also be noted which *assessment procedures* are available and how these refer to the specific quality of the abilities to be assessed.¹²
- Moreover, the curriculum should include information about *education and training pathways*, also showing which alternative ways are possible, in particular, if parts of training/education are useable in the context of various professional activities. As a consequence, the curriculum should be *structured in a modular way*, this enables learners to *combine learning units according to their career objectives*. But it should be reflected that this only works if modularisation mirrors *structures of real work* and does not primarily follow organisational requirements of the curriculum. This requirement is met if the subdivision of a curriculum agrees with the separation of work process units¹³.

There are further topics which could play a role in the context of curricula design and maintenance:

- The teaching/training methods applied for training and education and the personnel initiating, supporting, and supervising learning processes
- The kind of organisations designing and updating curricula

¹¹ See e.g. CEDEFOP, Learning outcomes approaches in VET curricula, A comparative analysis of nine countries, p.136.

¹² For this issue see optimum model for assessment “essentials of assessment procedures” 2nd paragraph

¹³ Concerning the principles of separation see optimum model for assessment “essentials of assessment procedures” 3rd paragraph

Further aspects to be touched related to curricula

Choice of teaching methods

There are a lot of curricula which include hints for the right methods to be used for training and teaching. If this is sensible, then it is taken in account that there are specific conditions for teaching and training in differing institutional contexts (as work places or schools), and that teaching/training methods have even more to reflect the specific character of the target groups to be taught, trained, and or coached. This has, however, nothing to do with the main requirements of a *learning outcome oriented* curriculum; learning outcomes can steer training design only insofar as training and education should put a strong focus on the *application* of the abilities to be developed (by simulating, training on the job, etc.), and the degree to which this is possible depends upon the above mentioned conditions under which training and education takes place. At any rate, there are *no specific methodical requirements* which have to be considered substantial with regard to EQF adaptability.

Selection of educators

This is also true for the selection of training/teaching personnel: It is of course an advantage if a teacher/trainer can carry out her/his activity against the background of personal experience, but this is not a condition sine qua non; and it might even be insufficient to work only with practitioners if these are not able for theoretical reflection and/or to facilitate individual and group learning processes. It is therefore a crucial requirement on teaching and training personal within EQF adaptation that they are able to facilitate learning processes that likewise lead to the development of knowledge, skills and competences.

Bodies involved in curricula design and implementation

With regard to the selection of bodies responsible for design and updating of curricula, it can be argued similarly: It is certainly an advantage if practical experience supports design work, but as such this does not deliver a guarantee that curricula are elaborated in a way which helps to achieve EQF-described learning outcomes easily. This will work if the designing organisations take in account the *structural requirements* described above (learning outcome description, derivation of content from learning outcomes, modularisation according to work structure), and it should not play an essential role if the designing body is a public organisation, an organisation of social partners, or an educational institution.

Elements ideally covered by curricula

Following this argumentation, a curriculum ideally covers the following elements facilitating reference to the EQF:

- Title and definition of the curriculum
- Reference to the work processes¹⁴ via occupational profiles or equivalent instruments¹⁵
- Learning outcomes derived from the requirements of work processes, described in terms of abilities expressed in the EQF descriptors knowledge, skills and competencies (see "occupation profiles" for further information)
- Education and training pathways to which the curriculum refers
- Indications on the assessment of the required abilities

¹⁴ In this context, it should be reflected that traditional studies in Higher Education implicitly or explicitly refer to scientific *work*.

¹⁵ Since not in every country exist occupational profiles, there might be other ways to determine the reference of curricula to *work processes*. Be that as it may, it is crucial that *learning outcomes* steering curricula refer to the work process as an *ensemble of actions following common aims*, and not only encompass a list of not connected abilities which have been collected on the basis of an empirical analysis of the (mostly only technically understood) status quo. Otherwise *fragmentation of work* (which at certain levels is certainly a reality) will become the leading principle for all training and education under the flag of EQF appropriate learning outcome orientation.



Assessment procedures An optimum model

Assessment procedures

Assessment rules are traditionally closely linked to curricula, this sometimes gives the impression that they belong necessarily together. In most cases, this was even not true for the past: Regulations for the performance of examinations (the traditional ways of assessment) have always been formulated independently from curricula. Today's EQF requirements imply even a still stronger emphasis on this separation: The shift to *learning outcomes* opens doors for the acknowledgement of learning results which have been achieved via *non-formal and informal learning* that has not been structured in a way which is comparable with curricula.

Assessment delivers the basis for *certificates* which *entitle* individuals to work at a specific work position or at least make it appear reasonable. Thus assessment is the *interface between the world of work and the world of education and training*, marking a delicate position between stakeholders with sometimes considerably differing background. *Mutual trust* of these stakeholders is not as self-evident as it might seem according to experiences with some national traditions of collaboration; and it is certainly a big challenge to achieve a comparable *common understanding* among stakeholders all over Europe.

Essentials of assessment procedures

The more it is important to reflect the essentials of assessment procedures which shall meet the requirements of trans-nationally acknowledged measures:

- Descriptions of assessment rules have to specify the learning outcomes to be achieved (which are derived from work processes).
- *The way how individuals have to prove that they possess the abilities to be achieved* should be oriented to their specific character and demonstrate, as far as possible, the *application* of these abilities. There are certainly limitations for procedures of this kind: A simulation of a real world scenario will not very often be possible, and if we consider the three columns of EQF descriptors, we can easily discover that *knowledge* can be controlled without big efforts, it becomes more difficult with *skills* (which normally requires a work environment), and it becomes even more challenging with *competence*. Nevertheless, it should not given up from the very beginning to make assessment procedures more "reality-oriented" ; at any rate assessment procedures should not "disappear" behind certification degrees, but be described in certificates, thereby showing the value of assessment by the degree of "realism". This creates *transparency*, an indispensable condition of mutual trust.
- *Subdivision or separation of assessment measures* should mirror the structure of work processes and not primarily be oriented to bureaucratic or organisational issues. This should on the one hand provide for enough *flexibility to make the same learning outcomes useable for differing education and training paths* if the same partial work process appears as a part of different professions (or ensembles of professional activities) , on the other hand it should be ensured that these partial work processes are independent enough from others that they allow for an assessment of overarching abilities.

- Since in spite of all efforts to provide for trans-national comparability of assessment procedures there will always be a certain spectrum of differing understanding, it is important that a *commitment* of stakeholders responsible for assessment in national and sectoral environment is achieved who will in the future collaborate transnationally and by practice create *zones of mutual trust*¹⁶.
- Assessment procedures should, as far as this is relevant, refer to European quality assurance standards as defined by EQAVET and EQAR.

Elements ideally covered by assessment procedures

Following these reflections, descriptions of assessment procedures should cover the following issues:

- Title and definition of assessment measure
- Reference to work processes via occupational profiles or equivalent instruments
- Learning outcomes derived from the requirements of work processes, described in terms of abilities expressed by the EQF descriptors *knowledge, skills and competences*
- Education and training pathways to which the assessment procedure(s) refer
- Description of the way(s) how assessment is carried out
- References to European quality assurance standards
- Responsible bodies and their role in national/sectoral environments

¹⁶ establishment of trust between (the stakeholders of) different national VET systems based on acceptance of differences between national qualification systems at different levels