

ENVOL

Recognition of Transversal
and Professional
competences of the first
qualification levels of EQF

IO4: Recommendations
guide for the stakeholders



Erasmus+

Table of Contents (INDEX)

Introduction	3
1 Analysis of the current national qualification frameworks compared to the ENVOL model	6
1.1 BELGIUM	8
1.2 ITALY	11
1.3 PORTUGAL	17
1.4 SPAIN	21
2 Recommendations at national level	24
2.1 BELGIUM	24
2.2 ITALY	25
2.3 PORTUGAL	29
2.4 SPAIN	30
3 Recommendations at european level	31
Conclusions	34

INTRODUCTION

The ENVOL project aims to:

- provide an overview of the approaches and methodologies implemented at national levels for the recognition and validation of non-formal and/or informal learning outcomes for low-skilled groups at EQF levels 1 and 2;
- describe and analyse examples of good practices in developing the positioning and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes at EQF levels 1 and 2;
- identify common transnational issues and make recommendations to policy makers.

The general objective of this project will therefore aim to strengthen existing mechanisms for the valorisation, recognition and validation of learning outcomes in order to enable the positioning of training offers and learning outcomes for low-skilled groups in national qualification frameworks (in connection with the EQF) at level 1,2 via the development of a system recognised by the competent authorities enabling learners to receive recognition and positioning of their learning outcomes within non-formal and informal training systems.

IO1 gives an overview of the different qualification systems in the countries involved in the consortium. The EQF allows to define common key terms and global profiles, but the different National frameworks and qualification's structure, as well as the different procedures used in each country, lead to a huge challenge in achieving the target, set for this IO1.

In IO2, the project team has identified "common characteristics between the case studies" and deduced a model for positioning non-formal/informal learning outcomes at levels 1 and 2 of the qualification framework of partner countries based on identified good practices.

In IO2, partners have as a first step, explained from their point of view the need for the recognition of level 1 and 2 and identified the main target groups and end users of the Model. Then, they described and presented the results of the workshops developed in each country analysing executive/basic professional profiles and compared their characteristics with the descriptors of the EQF and NQF within levels 1 and 2.

As a reference for the professional roles at the lowest EQF levels, in IO2 and IO3, partners took the description done by International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) of elementary occupations of group 9.

The result of this analysis has been the base for producing the third intellectual product (IO3).

IO3 has been intended to propose a user guide that helps to understand and apply in real cases the Model.

For doing that, partners have used an example of application of the model to units of competence at the level EQF1 and 2 in the kitchen elementary works.

It is therefore an instrument that aims to provide assistance to end users who are supporting the target group (i.e. low skilled people) involved in a process for the recognition of the skills acquired by different means, including formal, non-formal and informal learning experiences. It can also support and facilitate end users in positioning a specific qualification through the analysis of the expected achievements in each unit of competence.

Please, bear in mind that in the ENVOL project end users are identified as those operators:

- Training organizations that work with the target group (low skilled people);
- Organizations with responsibility to develop and design training pathways;
- Associations that represent training organizations or specific's one in some professional sector.

The objective of this last output (IO4) is to identify specific recommendations for the project partners' Countries and common recommendations at European level.

For this reason, we have identified two specific final addressees in the framework of IO4:

- Competent authorities of each project partner
- Vocational training and adult education system (through EPALE & the ERASMUS+ platform).

APPROACH

Partners have agreed to adopt the following approach:

1. Comparison between ENVOL model and the current structures for the descriptions of professional profiles and related Units of Competences/Learning Outcomes
2. Analysis of the achievements of the current systems (structures for the descriptions of professional profiles and related Units of Competences/Learning Outcomes, ...) and remarks about the national/regional situation
3. Proposal of suggestions / recommendations for the improvement of the current structures in each Country
4. Identification of common suggestions to be addressed to the European level.

Those recommendations would like to contribute to the debate that is ongoing at European level to reach the development objectives set by the European policies, particularly regarding Upskilling Pathways for Adults, micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability as well as the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience and the role of vocational education and training (VET) in the process.

In order to facilitate the comprehension of the next sections of the document, we mention below some of the key concepts that are referred to in the ENVOL's recommendations.

Upskilling pathways

With the definition "Upskilling Pathways" in the Council Recommendation of 19 December 2016 (2016/C 484/01) are meant "flexible opportunities to improve literacy, numeracy and digital competence of adults with a low level of skills, knowledge and competences who are not eligible for support under the Youth Guarantee. Those upskilling pathways would provide them with and to progress towards higher European Qualifications Framework (EQF) levels relevant for the labour market and for active participation in society.

Micro-credentials

To date, there is no common definition of micro-credentials and no standards to describe and recognise micro-credentials.

In a wide sense, micro-credential is the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small learning experience (e.g. certificate, award).

According to this definition, a micro-credential can support targeted, flexible, 'life-wide' learner centred forms of education and training to upskill and reskill any kind of person, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of the population such as people with disabilities, older people, people with low skills/low competences, minorities, people with a migrant background, refugees and people who are less advantaged due to their geographical remoteness and/or disadvantaged socio-economic situation), in different contexts (at work, at home, among people already in employment, and among people who are currently unemployed) to meet new and emerging needs in society and the labour market.

The debate nowadays about micro-credentials is seeking the best balance between the following poles: from one side micro-credentials can offer a range of opportunity to use them in the most flexible way to promote inclusion and facilitate access to education and training and vocational opportunities for a greater diversity of learners, but, on the other side, an excess of flexibility can raise concerns about their value, quality, recognition, transparency and 'transferability' (transferability between and within education and training sectors, transferability in the labour market and transferability between countries).

Occupations Classification: ESCO and ISCO

In IO3, partners have decided to refer to occupation classification standards, such as ISCO, to relate to professional profiles with a common terminology and clearly identifiable on a hierarchical structure acknowledged at international level.

ISCO is the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). ISCO is a tool for organizing jobs into a clearly defined set of groups according to the tasks and duties undertaken in the job.

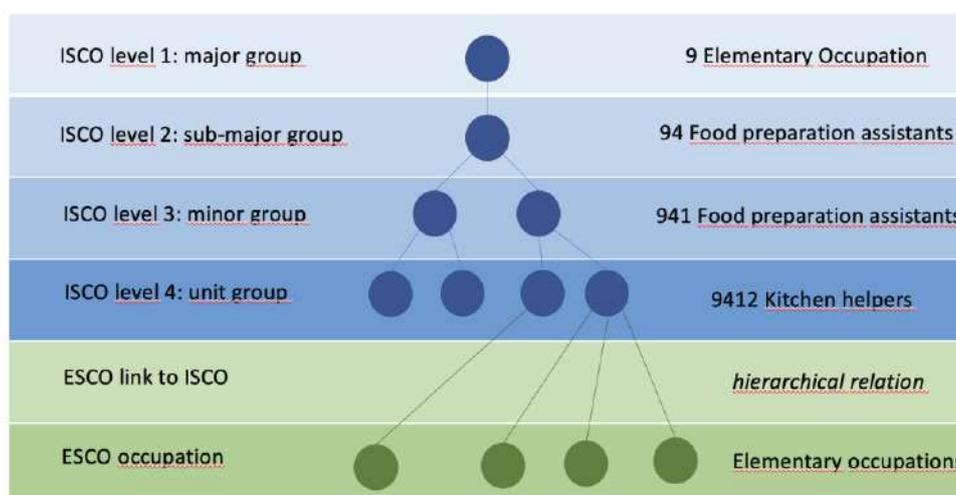
There is another occupation classification standard that is also relevant for the project, i.e. the ESCO classification.

ESCO¹ is the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. It identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training, in 25 European languages. The system provides occupational profiles showing the relationships between occupations, skills, competences and qualifications.

In the next paragraphs we're going to clarify how the two standards are related each other.

In ESCO, each occupation is mapped to exactly one ISCO-08 code. ISCO-08 can therefore be additionally used as a hierarchical structure for the occupations pillar.

The following diagram illustrates the role of ISCO 08 in the hierarchical structure of the ESCO occupations pillar. ISCO-08 provides the top four levels for the occupations pillar. ESCO occupations are located at level 5 and lower.



ESCO mapped for the Elementary Occupation of ISCO in <https://www.esco-projects.eu/esco/portal/escopedia/>, adapted by ENVOL

Since ISCO is a statistical classification, its occupation groups do not overlap. Each ESCO occupation is therefore mapped to only one ISCO unit group. It follows from this structure, that ESCO occupation concepts can be equal to or narrower than ISCO unit groups, but not broader. The result is a strictly mono-hierarchical structure where each element at level 2 or lower has exactly one parent.

A few groups of ISCO-08 do not contain ESCO occupations. These are usually occupation groups with no economic activity in the EU, such as "water and firewood collectors".

Source: [https://www.esco-projects.eu/esco/portal/escopedia/International Standard Classification of Occupations 40 ISCO 41](https://www.esco-projects.eu/esco/portal/escopedia/International%20Standard%20Classification%20of%20Occupations%2040%20ISCO%2041)

¹ http://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/ESCO/56/4/en_ESCO_Booklet_612564.pdf.

1 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS COMPARED TO THE ENVOL MODEL

The items to analyse the current national qualification frameworks were identified following a set of six guiding questions.

The six items are:

1. Completeness
2. Structure of the Unit of Competence
3. Compliance with EQF Descriptors
4. Supporting tools
5. Consistency / Coherence of the levels of the professional profiles and Units of Competence
6. Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools.

The related guiding questions are:

1. Completeness: are all EQF Levels properly considered in the National Qualification System as well as in the relevant sub-systems?
2. Structure of the Unit of Competence: are all the key elements necessary to identify the EQF level explicitly analysed? Please bear in mind that those elements (and related subdomains), according to ENVOL model are:

EQF Level	NQF Level	
Title		
Description		
Knowledge	Depth of Knowledge	Knowledge complexity
		Predominant Type of Knowledge
	Understanding and critical thinking	Predominant cognitive process
Skills	Understanding and Purpose	Knowledge apply
		Task Complexity
		Purpose
Autonomy and Responsibility	Autonomy	Degree of autonomy
	Responsibility	Degree of responsibility for own work
		Degree of responsibility for others work
Context	Understanding/Purpose	Context of application
		Predictability and complexity
Assessment	activities whose execution demonstrates that the person has reached the Unit of Competence + performance criteria	

3. Compliance with EQF Descriptors: are the guiding verbs respected (adapted in ENVOL project from the Bloom's taxonomy (1956) as revised by Anderson-Krathwohl (2001))?
4. Supporting tools: are supporting tools such as guidelines, methodological manuals, checklist... available? Are they enough clear, detailed and helpful?
5. Consistency / Coherence of the levels of professional profiles and Units of Competence: following a cross-check with other countries and other professional profiles from the same country, as well as with ISCO/ ESCO classification, do you think the level of the professional profile of cook and cook-assistant in your Country's NQF is consistently referred to?
6. Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools: are the current recognition and validation tools adequate to promote skills upgrading for the most vulnerable groups/at risk of exclusion?

For each of those items, partners have reflected about achievements and given their remarks, if any.

From these reflections, partners have identified needs that they would like to share and recommendations specifically related to the ENVOL project objectives and focus: promoting the valorisation of vocational competences at EQF levels 1-2 acquired by low skilled people through formal/non formal/informal learning pathways.

1.1 BELGIUM

1. Completeness	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>All the EQF levels (8) are considered in the Befr NQF and each level is explained by the description of the learning outcomes (Knowledge, Skills and Context, autonomy and responsibility) in each of the 8 levels related to the EQF descriptors</p>	<p>The level descriptors of the BEfr NQF learning outcomes (Knowledge and skills, Context, Autonomy and responsibility) could be better detailed in order to have a better understanding of the differences in levels as in the Portuguese NQF which offers, in addition to the generic descriptors, detailed descriptors (see IO1 chapter 3.3.4 PORTUGUESE NQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS 1 & 2).</p> <p>Although there are level 1 descriptors in the NQF Befr, no vocational qualifications are positioned right now. Only qualifications from compulsory education at primary level are identified at this level (CEB).</p>

2. Structure of the Unit of Competence	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The catalogue of occupational profiles / competences is currently not structured in terms of competence units but in terms of key activities consisting of occupational competences and detailed occupational competences which do not describe the learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are described in the Training Profile within the Units of learning outcomes composing the qualification of a trade.</p> <p>Currently a pilot project is working on the creation of a common certification of professional competences for 4 public training operators (Bruxelles Formation, Le Forem, IFAPME, Sfpme) & the Consortium de Validation des Compétences.</p> <p>This certification would be based on the certification of Units of Competence.</p>	<p>Work is currently in progress and we do not yet have more precise information to determine whether the structure of the certified Units of Competence will be fully comparable to that identified in the ENVOL project. Within the framework of the Walloon Recovery Plan being implemented in French-speaking Belgium (2022-2024), it is planned to develop the recognition of the learning outcomes of trainees who have followed a training course in a Socio-professional Integration training center (non-formal learning). The work undertaken in the framework of the ENVOL project could enrich the reflections and actions to be carried out in order to allow the recognition of non-formal learning.</p>

<p>These Competence Units represent the "first" coherent set of Learning Achievement Units that are jointly indispensable in the context of professional activities, covering or composing a particular job profile, and giving access to employment.</p> <p>The Competence Unit may cover all the Learning Units of a training profile or several Competence Units may compose a job profile.</p>	
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3. Compliance with EQF Descriptors	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The description of the NQF descriptors is only linked to the description of the generic descriptors of the EQF but not to the guide verbs, the taxonomy of knowledge adapted in the ENVOL project (derived from the taxonomy of Bloom (1956) and revised by Anderson-Krathwohl (2001).</p>	<p>See remarks in 1. Completeness.</p>

4. Supporting tools	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>All the professional and training profiles are available on the official website of the SFMQ² and another website permit to access to the repertoire of qualification (CFC³).</p> <p>The two websites give a lot of information about the structure of the SFMQ and CFC.</p>	<p>The profile methodology of the SFMQ could be more explicit and give some options and/or illustrations in terms of the production of the professional and training profile, like in the Portuguese ANQEP guide.</p>

² French-speaking service for trades and qualifications.

³ French-speaking Qualifications Framework (CFC).

5. Consistency / Coherence of levels of professional profiles & Units of Competence

ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>A new professional and training profile has just been produced by the SFMQ for the First Cook assistant in 2021 and it permits to give more information of the level of qualification that is referenced into the NQF at level 2.</p>	<p>The methodology of referencing is not clear and it's difficult to identify the difference of level of qualification between the first Cook assistant and the Cook assistant. It could be necessary to develop the professional profile of the Cook assistant into the SFMQ (official service who develop the professional and training profiles) to see if this qualification is lower than the first Cook assistant.</p>

6. Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools

ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>In 2021 the number of qualifications positioned at level 2 of the CNC has increased and allows access to 16 qualifications or titles of competence.</p> <p>In 2022 the Walloon government has released funds to allow an increase in the validation of skills at the first levels of qualification.</p>	<p>The system of tests set up for the validation of skills is not always adapted to the vulnerable public, who are very far from employment and who have encountered strong difficulties during their educational career.</p> <p>Even if the tests allowing the delivery of a competence title (validation of competences in Befr) are based on the realization of tasks, they can include a more theoretical part requiring basic competences not necessarily indispensable to the technical competences evaluated.</p> <p>The Walloon government, as part of its Recovery Plan, has identified the need to strengthen the validation of skills at the first levels of qualification and actions will be taken to find solutions to strengthen this validation at the first levels of qualification.</p>

1.2 ITALY

1. Completeness	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The NQF is articulated in 8 levels, each corresponding exactly to its EQF counterpart.</p> <p>The levels of the NQF are specified through descriptors adopting as reference dimensions knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility (referring to the complexity of the context in which the competence is acted, to the level of control over one's own action and results and on the others' ones).</p> <p>The referencing to the NQF of the qualifications of the public lifelong learning offer allows the inclusion of qualifications (including those awarded by the regions in their regional systems) in the National Repertoire of Education and Training Qualifications and Vocational Qualifications.</p> <p>It is envisaged that all qualifications will be referenced to the NQF for validation and certification within the National Skills Certification System.</p> <p>In the 2020 reform proposal the existence of EQF2 vocational qualifications is clearly highlighted.</p>	<p>Not all EQF levels are covered for vocational qualifications: EQF 1 only for general education (school) qualifications which "certify" basic skills/cultural axes.</p> <p>It is not necessary to have Vocational Qualifications at level EQF1 but it's important to have competences described at EQF level 1, where it makes sense (like for example in kitchen/food preparation tasks), so that they can be recognized to those who have reached them and, consequently, be valued both for a basic job placement and for the choice of an upper level of education.</p> <p>The social economy labor market might also include people with special needs or in socio-occupational integration pathways who have a lower level of competence (particularly in terms of autonomy, responsibility and stability/predictability of the context) than required by the current vocational qualifications.</p>

2. Structure of the Unit of Competence	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The NQF levels are specified through descriptors that adopt knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility as reference dimensions.</p> <p>The Friuli Venezia Giulia repertoire adopts an organic structure for the description of competence units, based on knowledge and skills. It makes explicit the EQF level and, through the code of the Unit of Competence ("RPQ"), the macro-sector of reference, which helps to compare with the Areas of Activity (ADA) of the Atlas of Professions. It makes use of the same Unit of Competence (RPQ) for more than one professional qualification where it is appropriate, without duplication, making easily understandable the "professional family" in which the Unit of Competence (RPQ) has been generated.</p> <p>The Work Situational Typologies sheets (WST) for each Unit of Competence (RPQ) are very useful to facilitate communication with companies (using a language they can understand). In addition, the graphical visualization with the red line outlining the "level of professionalism" required for each Work Situational Typologies sheets (WST) suggests an incremental gradualness of competence mastery, as the complexity, depth, extent, type of knowledge and skills increase. In the Atlas of Work, the EQF level attributed to professional profiles and to units of competence is not always clearly indicated. The "case cards" related to the expected results are referred to different "degrees of complexity" and give an easily understandable indication of a gradualness of the level of proficiency.</p> <p>Unfortunately, they are not uniquely and unequivocally linked to EQF levels and related descriptors.</p>	<p>In the Atlas of Work, the EQF level attributed to professional profiles and to units of competence is not always clearly indicated. The "case cards" related to the expected results are referred to different "degrees of complexity" and give an easily understandable indication of a gradualness of the level of proficiency.</p> <p>Unfortunately, they are not uniquely and unequivocally linked to EQF levels and related descriptors.</p> <p>If for the purposes of national correlation, the Atlas may allow a comparison between regional systems based on the Areas of Activity (ADAs), when a comparison with other European qualifications is desired, the explication of the EQF level of expected outcomes linked to the profiles/units of competences could be useful to facilitate the comparison and, if the case, subsequent equalization.</p> <p>The structure of the description of qualifications is not homogeneous among the different regional repertoires.</p> <p>The Friuli Venezia Giulia regional repertoire does not foresee specific fields for Context, Autonomy and Responsibility, which are somehow implicit in the EQF level attributed to the Unit of Competence (RPQ). If this may be sufficient for an expert operator, it would be more difficult to be clear for a beneficiary of a process of identification, recognition, validation and certification of competences or to a company.</p>

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3. Compliance with EQF Descriptors	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The Friuli Venezia Giulia repertoire was inspired by an analysis work carried out by the Lombardy Region (see its "Guidelines for the description of regional professional qualifications") regarding the guide-verbs to use in the competence description. This work implemented the idea proposed by INAPP (National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies) to relate competences to the phases of the production process of a product / service.</p> <p>Specifically, a matrix was constructed where on one side the process steps (e.g., product/service design, production/implementation process planning, practical execution of the work, in-process monitoring and final control, anomaly recovery, and improvement actions) were placed, and on the other side the EQF levels (3 to 7). A set of guiding verbs appropriate to each level for each stage of the process were identified in the intersection boxes.</p> <p>In addition, from a methodological point of view, the single competencies were articulated into incremental mastery bands on 3-level scales (specifically on levels 3-4-5, 4-5-6 or 5-6-7).</p>	<p>In the work carried out in Lombardy, no ranges of competences in the lower levels (1 and 2) were included.</p> <p>Compared to the work by the Lombardy Region, in the development of the Friuli Venezia Giulia regional repertoire, a simplification was made.</p> <p>Specifically, the verbs characterizing the actions of the competence were directly associated to the EQF levels, eliminating the intermediate step related to the process phases.</p> <p>The Friuli Venezia Giulia's repertoire starts from Units of Competence (RPQ) at a central level and redefines them as "partial" in the lower levels and "extended" in the higher levels.</p> <p>At the moment, the lists of knowledge and skills have not been trimmed of elements referring to higher levels nor redefined in the use of guide verbs and knowledge descriptors.</p> <p>The only difference emerges in the position of the red line in the Work Situational Typologies sheets (WST), which is not reported in the Certificate of Competence.</p>

4. Supporting tools	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>There are methodological indications in the document illustrating the NQF for the use, in the definition of the units of competences, of the forms corresponding to the appropriate EQF level.</p>	<p>The methodological indications in the document illustrating the NQF are too general and do not provide comparative examples of the same "object" at different EQF levels.</p> <p>The limit is given by the level of depth/accuracy with which the elements of the competence are described. Example, if I indicate "Principles of food merchandising" at EQF level 2, what do I indicate at EQF level 3?</p>

5. Consistency / Coherence of levels of professional profiles & Units of Competence	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The Friuli Venezia Giulia's repertoire associates an EQF level to all qualifications.</p>	<p>As highlighted also in the European Inventory on NQF 2020 Italy by CEDEFOP, the Italian education and training system is fragmented: there are 21 regions and 2 autonomous provinces.</p> <p>Following the reform of the V Title of the Constitution in Dec. 2001, the regions increased their competence in education, maintained their competence in the vocational training field and in the definition of professional profiles and qualifications.</p> <p>It has been a challenge to integrate different levels of lifelong learning into a coherent national qualification system and to achieve effective inter-regional coordination, recognition of the regional qualification systems, and inter-regional mobility.</p> <p>Some qualifications representing different levels of professionalism are included in the Friuli Venezia Giulia's repertoire with the same EQF level.</p>

	<p>Between the different regional systems, there is a plurality of nomenclatures of professional profiles that are also at national level difficult to compare, requiring an in-depth analysis based on the "expected results" (i.e. learning outcomes / competences acquired) that may correspond to the same profile.</p> <p>At national level and in some regions, occupational profiles are not explicitly associated with an EQF level.</p> <p>The competences associated to the Areas of Activity (around which the professional qualifications are articulated) in the Atlas of Work are not explicitly referred to EQF levels.</p>
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6. Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools

ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>It already exists the possibility (and in some cases the usual practice) of valorizing the elements of the Work Situational Typologies sheets (WST) achieved for Units of Competence (RPQ) not completed in the certificates at the end of training courses that have not achieved all the learning outcomes foreseen for the obtainment of a qualification or of an entire Unit of Competence (RPQ).</p> <p>Recently (Guidelines for issuing certificates at the end of formal pathways or as a result of the IVC service - January 2022) the same opportunity was introduced also in the processes of validation of non-formal learning, to valorize also parts of Unit of Competences not completed (micro-credentials).</p>	<p>Some competences required by the labor market are too "micro" or specific to be included as autonomous Units of Competence in the NQF.</p> <p>The process of revision / updating / integration of qualification repertoires & validation processes requires mediation between different perspectives, and, given the Units of Competence already present in the system, it requires a lot of work and therefore a lot of time.</p> <p>The context for awarding qualifications is complex, governed by many legislative acts under different regional & national authorities. One of the main challenges in harmonizing the education, training and qualification system into one NQF is the high number of stakeholders involved; diverse qualification repositories and quality assurance systems at national and regional level are autonomously managed by the awarding bodies⁴.</p>

⁴ See European Inventory on NQF 2020 Italy.

1.3 PORTUGAL

1. Completeness	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The Portuguese NQF includes the same 8 levels of qualification as the EQF. With direct correspondence.</p> <p>All levels are described using a scale of indicators that characterize the expected learning outcome for each level, in terms of Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes and Context.</p>	<p>As presented in IO1 and IO2, the NQF considers the 8 levels foreseen in the EQF, but not all of them have correspondence in what concerns the academic and professional qualification. According to the Portuguese Qualification Framework, the first level of professional qualification is level 2, following level 4. Level 1 and level 3 have only academic qualification and those don't have any professional framework associated.</p>

2. Structure of the Unit of Competence	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The Unit of Competence is composed of various elements: achievements (actions through which the individual evidences mastery of the Unit of Competence); knowledge, skills and attitudes; performance criteria (the set of Unit of Competence quality requirements associated with performance); external resources (the set of available resources that assist in the development of the expected achievements) and context conditions (They concretize the different actions/achievements in a given space and time and in a concrete situation).</p> <p>The structure allows users to adequately read and use the Unit of Competences in a work context.</p> <p>The process of constructing a Unit of Competence is described step by step in the Methodological Guide.</p>	<p>Although there are some updates, not all the Units of Competence available in the Catalogue of Qualifications respect the structure defined in the Methodological Guide.</p>

3. Compliance with EQF Descriptors	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The National Qualifications Framework presents a clear and direct relationship between the levels and descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework, as can be seen in the reference report from the NQF to the EQF of July 2011.</p> <p>In the scope of its applicability and translation for the several users (education and vocational training system operators, students at different levels of education and training, professionals working in the System, human resources technicians and employers) the level descriptors were deconstructed.</p> <p>In this process, subdomains of knowledge, skills and attitudes were created with specific characteristics that are articulated using Bloom's taxonomy, revised by Krathwohl.</p> <p>The use of this taxonomy allows users to better understand the NQF, contributing to an effective practice when designing training units and positioning training units.</p> <p>The readability of the learning outcomes associated with each qualification level of the NQF makes users effectively view it as a single frame of reference for classifying all qualifications regardless of how they were acquired, i.e. in formal, non-formal or informal contexts.</p>	<p>The number of training sessions for teams on the interpretation of the NQF.</p>

4. Supporting tools	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>Over the years, in a process of constant updating, the tutelage of the National Qualifications System has developed an intense work of continuous training of professionals who work in the qualification process. In addition to face-to-face and online training, they edited guidebooks for using the NQF, such as the Interpretive Guide to the NQF and the Methodological Guide – Designing qualifications based on learning outcomes. The referred manuals, in addition to presenting the theoretical foundations, also provide concrete examples and support tools.</p>	<p>Absence of Agency working groups in permanent attendance to support and clarify the teams of the various qualification devices.</p> <p>(Recommendation - creation of knowledge communities)</p>

5. Consistency / Coherence of levels of professional profiles & Units of Competence	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The Units of Competences do not have an assigned level, so some may appear in benchmarks of different courses and different levels according to the need of each qualification.</p> <p>As mentioned above, the Units of Competences do not have a level, it is the qualifications that determine the level. Thus, there are units that can integrate both level 2 qualifications and level 4 qualifications.</p>	<p>As mentioned in Table 1 Completeness, the inexistence of vocational level 1 qualifications and the demand for minimum academic requirements for access to a level 2 vocational training pathway prevent people with low levels of schooling and literacy from accessing vocational courses.</p> <p>Considering the different professional profiles and categories existing in the area of cooking, for example, and considering the level of complexity and autonomy required in the existing level 2 qualifications, it can be seen that there is a wide range of possibilities for the creation of level 1 qualifications, as they are activities that require elementary skills and therefore less demanding.</p>

6. Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools

ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>In Portugal, the processes of recognition and validation of competences are based on the combination of the application of the autobiographical approach, of skill balance and the construction of a reflective portfolio of learning. For the application of these methodologies, there are tools and instruments that contribute to the formulation of questions that support the identification of formative experiences into example skills, through interviews, references, reflective orientations, grids with instructions, among others. These instruments are applied according to a stage in which the processes are.</p> <p>In the scope of professional training, the system provides a kit of instruments to be applied in the scope of practical tests.</p> <p>The work instruments integrate guides for basic and professional references.</p>	<p>The methodology of autobiographical narratives implies capacities for reflection that are not within the reach of all those with the competences to certify. Especially when it comes to level 1 and 2 candidates. It is very important to emphasize this.</p>

1.4 SPAIN

1. Completeness	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>All the EQF levels are considered in the Spanish NQF and each level is explained by learning outcomes: Knowledge, Skills and Context, autonomy & responsibility. Vocational education is a very attractive option among the education chances and also of quality. Furthermore, it's adaptable to personal necessity of people who are studying to improve their professional lives.</p>	<p>Spain is the only country in Europe to unify level 1 and 2 of EFQ and this could create confusion to the general public or end users of our user guide</p>

2. Structure of the Unit of Competence	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>In Spain the professional and vocational education is well developed since more than 30 years and all the domain of competence are described in the professional qualification. As a matter of fact, each unit of competence has the following details: name, level and alphanumerical code</p>	<p>As Spain was one of the first countries to develop the professional qualification system, the structure of the unit of competence is different: namely, a professional qualification is initially formed by professional outcome, professional context and outcome evaluation criteria. Furthermore, inside each unit of competence there are also formative modules that are described by skill, context and evaluation criteria. If the descriptors used to position the unit of competence in this project are effectively named inside the description of the unit of competence, they are still not used as main descriptor of the unit of competence.</p>

3. Compliance with EQF Descriptors	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>The programming and evaluation of competence is well developed in the Spanish legislation so it's easy to see if students are accomplishing with them in each level</p>	<p>Teachers must be trained in the programming and evaluation of competences, since with the new vocational training system there is a certain nomenclature that changes and therefore can lead to confusion when it comes to checking if the descriptors are really met.</p>

4. Supporting tools	
ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>Spain could be an example as all the tools to proof the skills and knowledge's are very well developed in the legislation that rules these qualifications.</p>	<p>As a weak and point we could point out on another hand that Spanish legislation allows however sometimes to recognize professional skills by submitting no official qualification that should be examined, with other tools like practical test or other kind of examination tools.</p> <p>For –singular- example, the project “Acredita”⁵ is little or not known by the niche of people who could be interested in it, such as, for example, the population with no official qualification.</p> <p>It's therefore necessary to spread more the information about Acredita so that unqualified people can access and validate their professional experience.</p>

⁵ Acredita is the legal and official procedure in order to recognize and validate no formal education into formal one. To know more, consult the [Royal Decree 1224/2009, July the 17th](#).

5. Consistency / Coherence of levels of professional profiles & Units of Competence

ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>In Spain the professional and vocational education is well developed since more than 30 years and all the domain of competence are described in the professional qualification. Furthermore, Spain has a specific project, called "Acredita" ("Validation"), through which a person, who doesn't have an official qualification, is counselled and evaluated in order to achieve an official qualification.</p> <p>Currently, VET is the professional studies closest to the reality of the labour market and responds to the need for qualified personnel specialized in the different professional sectors to respond to the current demand for employment.</p>	<p>In this moment the Spanish legislator is unifying the vocational education in only one path (until now there were 2 professional kind of qualification, one recognized by the Minister of Education and the other by the Employment and Labor Minister) and this maybe could lead to put in the professional qualification a bit more of theoretical concepts distancing the professional qualification from the real need of the job market.</p>

6. Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools

ACHIEVEMENTS	REMARKS
<p>Right now the tools are adequate for most vulnerable group of workers because there is the chance to validate no official qualification into formal one.</p>	<p>The problem in the Spanish legislation is that the proceeding to recognize the competences are not open all the year round but the administrative authority has to open it, and it is usually each two years.</p> <p>It's necessary also to inform the end users about the validation and recognition tools provided by the Spanish system to spread the validation culture of professional experience. It's also true that the proceeding is long and it lasts a lot of time because people who are acting in this proceeding are not well trained to counsel and validate competences.</p>

2 RECOMMENDATIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Below the recommendations that each partner has proposed for their own Countries.

2.1 BELGIUM

To better understand these levels, the starting point for their definition is clarified, i.e. the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

Completeness & Compliance with EQF descriptors

Even if all levels are included in the National Qualification Framework, no qualification has been identified at level 1 for vocational training or credentials delivered in the framework of the validation of competences and still very few at level 2. The non-formal training sector does provide however vocational training for so-called first level qualifications. It would be interesting to be able to take into consideration the results of learning outcomes obtained in the framework of these training courses in order to verify whether certain learning outcomes could not be positioned at levels 1 and/or 2 even if there are no formal qualifications positioned at these levels of qualification yet.

Structure of the unit of competence

In the framework of the ongoing pilot project on the development of the certification of vocational competences for public training operators and the validation of competences, it would be interesting to involve the non-formal training sector in order to identify the possibilities of having micro-credentials recognised as potential high-valuable parts of the units of learning outcomes structuring a Unit of Competence.

Supporting tools

A new methodological guide for the creation of the different job/competence profiles, training and evaluation should be created in order to better identify the links between these (SFMQ catalogue) and the future qualifications of professional competences composed of Units of competence as in the Portuguese ANQEP guide (see: https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/mg-design_qualifications_based_learning_outcomes.pdf).

Coherence / Coherence of levels of professional profiles and competence units

The referencing methodology is not clear and it is difficult to identify the difference in qualification level between the first kitchen assistant and the kitchen clerk. It might be necessary to develop the professional profile of the commis de cuisine in the SFMQ (official service that develops professional and training profiles) to see if this qualification is lower than that of the first commis de cuisine.

Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools

The Walloon government, in the framework of its recovery plan, has identified the need to strengthen the validation of competences at the first levels of qualification and actions will be undertaken to find solutions to strengthen this validation at the first levels of qualification.

2.2 ITALY

Completeness

At national level:

Introduce units of learning outcomes (or unit of competences) described at EQF level 1 for professional activities that can be part of a job under direct supervision (like for example in kitchen/food preparation tasks in the HORECA industry, or canteen services).

Invite all the Regions to include EQF level 1 and 2 units of learning outcomes (or unit of competences) in their regional professional qualification repertoires.

At regional level:

Overcome, in the regional Repertoire of Qualifications, the logic of "partial" achievement of Units of Competences (RPQ: Regional Professional Qualificators) and provide, for each Unit of Competences, a number of EQF levels consistent with its professional nature and built in an incremental logic, where each Unit of Competence (RPQ) is complete and self-consistent (it is autonomous in its description and recognisable/exploitable on the labour market).

This approach is already being used in the description of the Units of Competence (RPQs) for the "Digital Services" that is consistent with what expected from the Digi.Comp.2.2, that is organized into 5 areas, 21 competences and 8 levels of proficiency, that recall the 8 levels of the EQF.

Having the possibility to recognize EQF 1 and EQF 2, learning outcomes as "complete units" in an organic and incremental scale of proficiency can enable those who have reached them to be valued both for a basic job placement and for the choice of an upper level of (vocational) education. Otherwise, only for level 1, instead of "complete units" use the construct of micro-credentials, appropriately regulated.

This can also contribute to increase the self-awareness of low skilled people facing a job-search and to motivate them towards lifelong learning and upskilling pathways.

Structure of the Unit of Competence

At national level

Adopt a common, standard template for the description of the Units of Competences in all the qualifications included in the national repository of competences, covering all existing national, regional and sectoral repertoires of qualifications referenced to the EQF from school (general, technical and vocational) and higher education (under the authority of the Ministry of Education, University and Research), the regional VET system (under the authority of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano), and qualifications for regulated and nonregulated professions.

This to promote a more transparent, portable and stackable "collection" of Units of Competences (or Learning Outcomes, that at small scale can be also considered as "micro-credentials") and facilitate the interregional and international permeability between systems.

The template provided in ENVOL's IO3 can represent a standard to follow, as it clearly organises all the basic elements that characterize a unit of competence and make it referable to the EQF descriptors and levels.

The creation of a national repertoire of competences, as evolution of the work of collection, analysis, and comparison among the different regional qualification frameworks, could help overcoming the obstacle of the jurisdiction of individual regions on the issue of "professional qualifications" and give a boost to the transparency and recognition of qualifications and skills.

At FVG regional level:

Dedicate a specific field for "Autonomy and responsibility" into the template for the description of the unit of competence and highlight, as well, the type of context in which it is exercised, and its degree of familiarity, predictability or diversification of situations, tasks and activities.

This, following the example provided in the ENVOL IO3 based on the comparison with other national systems.

Integrating in a more structured way into the description of the unit of competence Autonomy, Responsibility and Context is particularly relevant for the lowest levels of EQF and to distinguish Level 1 from Level 2.

For levels 1 and 2 of the EQF, the ENVOL model suggests/reminds key terminologies that can represent in a clear and easily identifiable way the characteristics of the context, as well as the levels of autonomy and responsibility with respect to the individual result and process, which can provide a useful outline to make these elements more transparent in the description of the competence.

Compliance with EQF Descriptors

At national level

Strengthen the knowledge and capabilities of operators in charge of qualification design and "update/maintenance", training program development and/or identification, recognition, validation and certification of competences about concepts to classify and terminology to describe all elements composing the unit of competence structure, with a reference to the different EQF levels and the corresponding typologies/depth/width of knowledge, ability, typical tasks/activities/responsibility, autonomy, context of application of those skills.

This to guarantee the widest transparency about the criterion of attribution of the EQF level and ensure that the competence clearly reflects the level that has been attributed to it.

This recommendation is linked to the recommendation about the next item (supporting tool).

Promote continuous training of operators and periodical revision of the repositories of qualifications to solve unconformity issues as well as to renew the description of the units of competences consistently with the evolution of the labour market and in the perspective of a larger harmonization and portability of qualifications at interregional and international level.

At FVG regional level:

Revise the contents of the Unit of Competence (RPQ) in a decremental way from level 4 to level 1, respecting the guidelines on descriptors (guiding verbs associated to actions and process phases, taxonomy of knowledge and skills...).

Make "autonomous" (not partial) and "certifiable" (as complete) the units of competence of lower level with respect to the "parent" units of higher level.

Critically re-read the Work Situational Typologies Sheets (SST) and check whether moving the red line is sufficient to demarcate the levels of proficiency, or whether it is necessary to also review the contents of the single "boxes" (Work Situational Typology) in relation to the EQF level where the typical situation is handled.

Evaluate whether, with a view to scalable RPQs related to the same competency, to develop a single "multilevel" WST (advantage: overview - disadvantage: large size) or one WST for each identified RPQ (advantage: possibility of adjusting descriptions to EQF level - disadvantage: lack of overview).

Supporting tools

At national level

Elaborate a "taxonomic dictionary" illustrating a classification of verbs, adjectives, nouns, adverbs, examples of sentences, definitions explaining the meaning of certain words (e.g. principles of, elements of, hints of) that can be related to each EQF level descriptor.

This to represent the items forming a unit of competence in a correct way according to the appropriate EQF level, as illustrated in the example in ENVOL IO3.

Consider whether to define, at the national level, a set of descriptive verbs of vocational skills related on the one hand to EQF levels and on the other hand to process stages (e.g., product/service design, production/implementation process planning, practical execution of the work, in-process monitoring and final control, fault recovery and improvement actions).

At FVG regional level:

Same as for national level.

Consistency / Coherence of the levels of the professional profiles and Units of Competence

At national level

Associate explicitly for each profile the EQF level.

Assign an EQF level to each unit of competence (considering that in a profile of level x there may be Units of Competences of a lower or higher level, while respecting the character of prevalence).

Flank the revision of employment contracts with the EQF level of the professional profile, so that also in the calls/competitions for access to the job position reference is made to requirements consistent with the professional role and level of competence.

Use ESCO classification to identify the profiles to be compared and between which to verify possible inconsistencies to be corrected.

Complete the started pathway of comparison between qualifications, expected results for the different units of competence in the regional repertoires associated to the areas of activity in the Atlas of Professions. This in order to identify possible criticalities to be solved based on the descriptors.

Foster national uniformity of vocational qualifications and the issuing of qualification titles from the national repertoire. These qualifications could be combined with one or more addresses (which are also predefined at national level), as is the case for Licei, in order to reduce the fragmentation of qualifications, which does not reflect a real need on the labour market.

At FVG regional level:

Differentiate in all sectors the EQF level for professional profiles with an assistant role from the ones who have full responsibility for the process (e.g. cook-assistant VS cook).

Appoint lower (compared to full-profile) EQF levels to "assistant"-profiles, who play an EXECUTIVE role and perform a RESTRICTED number of SIMPLE activities, under SUPERVISION, ensuring CONFORMITY of RESULT in a structured work context with a limited number of diverse situations, compared to the profile who has a higher level of autonomy and responsibility in the process.

Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools

At national level

Redesign sets of Units of Competence on incremental EQF levels (ideally at least 3 different levels of proficiency). Valorize as Micro-credentials the parts of Units of Competence not completed.

At FVG regional level:

Revise the Friuli Venezia Giulia regional repertory, overcoming the logic of the "partially" achieved learning outcomes in the units of competences (or achieved in "extended" mode).

Replace this mode with the definition of units of competence of a lower (or HIGHER) level according to a decremental (or INCREMENTAL) logic, as it is already in its the repository of the sector "Digital services".

2.3 PORTUGAL

Completeness & Consistency / Coherence of the levels of the professional profiles and Units of Competence

Review of the National Qualification Framework with collaboration with all the sector councils for qualification and relevant stakeholders, especially employees, to identify professional categories that could be integrated in Level 1. This level could be the "entry" in our National Qualification system of several adults that cannot reach a higher level or for foreigners' adults without any qualification. For the labor market this could be a way to "offer" specific qualified workers, even in the lowest level of specialization, reduces cost regarding the specific on-the-job training and related to high labor mobility that is verified in the labor market for low-skilled workers.

Structure of the Unit of Competence

Coherence in all the Units of competences included in the Catalogue of Qualification according to the structure defined in the Methodological Guide.

Compliance with EQF Descriptors and Supporting tools

The restructuring of technical support to the various actors in the field who operate within the national qualifications system, allowing for the creation of forums and working groups for sharing and clarification with continuous training programmes within the scope of the different interpretations and implementation of the various existing instruments and guidelines.

Adequacy of current recognition and validation tools

Despite the consolidation and existing experience within the scope of the instruments supporting the process of recognition and validation in Portugal, the demand levels of the application of the methodologies, namely the reflection capacity implicit in the autobiographical narratives, are not always possible to reach in the scope of levels 1 and 2.

It will be important to reflect upon the construction and definition of other instruments and methodologies to support the process of recognition of competences for these first levels of qualification allowing not to demand, for instance, levels of autonomy and critical reflection above the general descriptors of the qualification levels themselves.

2.4 SPAIN

In Spain the education sector has undergone many remodelling's at all educational levels, but vocational training may be the one that has suffered the least from these modifications and, in some cases, it may have remained stagnant and needs a new vision that the new VET law that is in parliamentary process is carrying out.

The new law (Organic Law 3/2022, March 31th about integration and organization of the professional studies) states that the two system currently in force, the one of professional qualifications and the vocational professional studies (to which younger student usually enter the professional education) are integrate in one system, depending from the education minister. This means that the informal qualification and professional experience will have access into the vocational studies without the need of a recognition of the educational authorities. Namely, each unit of competence is going to have a code that recognised a series of learning outcome that end users or student could achieve by studying vocational courses or professional qualifications studies or by validating their informal qualification or professional qualification. By that, it descends, consequently, that each unit, with its code, is going to be registered in the educational register for the whole life of each person who has studied in Spain.

On the other hand, it's necessary to comment that the new reform of the VET begins to introduce the concept of micro-training that perhaps would be what most resembles the work developed in ENVOL and that is not yet well regulated or the draft law. Certainly, the recognition of micro-training would entail even more flexibility in the system so that not only vocational and unofficial training would have recognition, but also higher university education shares micro-credentials as a minimum unit in their frame.

In addition, today the possibility of recognition of informal and unofficial competences cannot be recognized either automatically or continuously. The accredited procedures are opened in each Spanish region for a certain period of time that, even though it is a long one, it is not sufficiently disseminated among the target population. Moreover, if that were not enough, these are long procedures that need to go through two phases, those of assessment and evaluation and they do not have specialized professionals, thus reducing the possibilities of professional development of the less fortunate.

On the other hand, although the procedures suffer from a lack of qualified personnel, it is also true that the legislation developed on the subject of valuation and accreditation tools are very well worked and developed.

Another pending issue is the concretion of levels of the Spanish national system that do not coincide with all the rest of the EU countries: this should end with micro-training since it has a European origin and the small bricks that is the base of the professional education of each person would be the same in one European country as another.

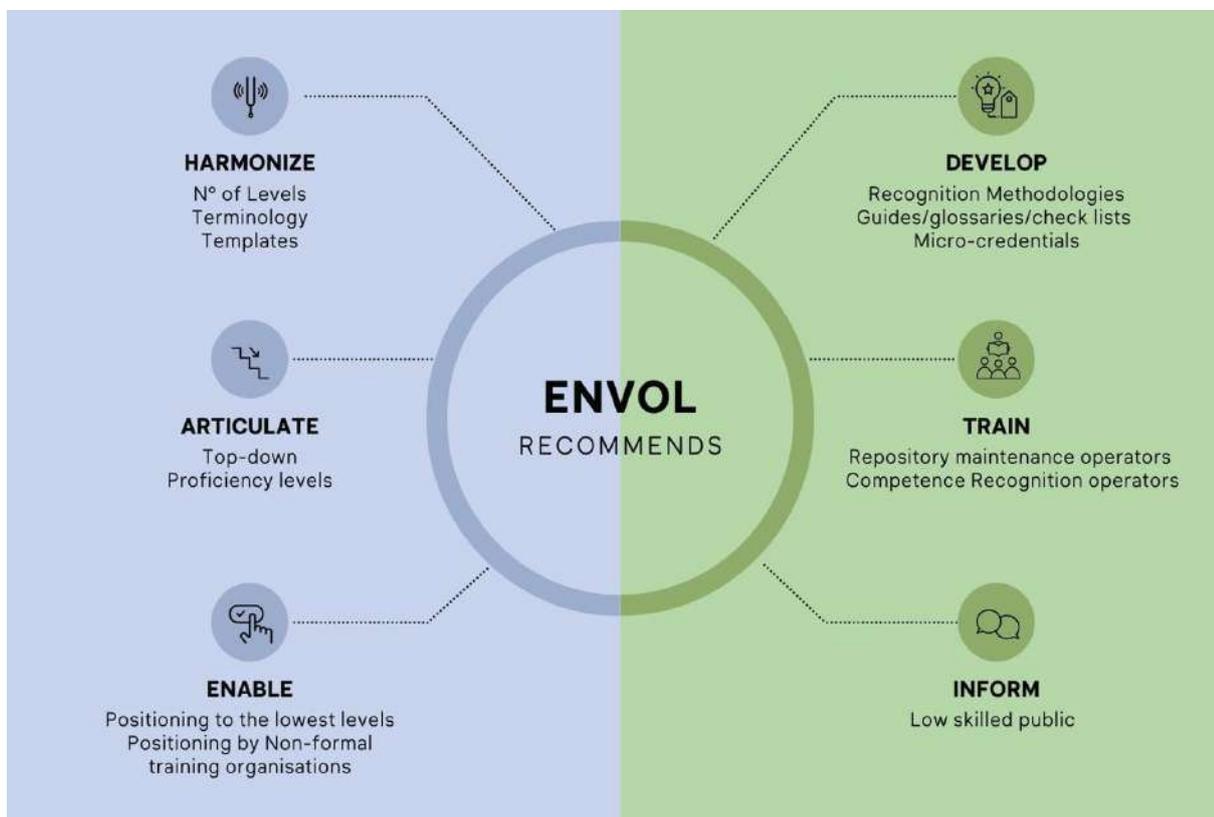
On the side of the strengths we can certainly affirm that, although the national qualifications system is different than in all the other countries of the EU countries, the Spanish system presents a degree of specificity and enormous development since professional training and in particular the professional qualifications are very well described in the legislation and its proximity to the world of work is noticeable and thus entails more possibilities for untrained workers to achieve recognition of their competences.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Partners have identified **six key verbs** to gather the common recommendations that emerged from their exchange and collaboration in the project and that they would like to suggest from their perspective of operators in the field of training and promotion of human resources who work with the target group of adults with low skills and low (or no) qualification.

These recommendations are specifically related to the ENVOL project objectives and focus on: promoting the **valorization of vocational competences** at **EQF levels 1-2** acquired by **low skilled people** through **formal/not formal/informal** learning pathways.

They represent a **contribution** from the work done within the ENVOL project to promote **harmonization** of the different national systems and foster **identification, transparency and portability** of EQF 1-2 competences.



Key verb: HARMONIZE

- **HARMONIZE NUMBER OF LEVELS:** all national qualification systems should be articulated on 8 levels, each one corresponding to the equivalent EQF level to facilitate univocal referencing.
- **HARMONIZE TERMINOLOGY** for the **MINIMUM CERTIFIABLE ELEMENT:** standard terminologies and definitions (in English) facilitates the transition of people from one system to another, even within European countries.

The ENVOL project adopted as a common denomination of the minimum certifiable element the term "unit of competence" and suggested to create a European catalogue of units of competence to support the recognition and portability of competences across EU Countries.

- **HARMONIZE TITLES AND DEFINITIONS** of the **ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL PROFILES**: at least for the professional profiles from level 1 to 3, and at least in some professional areas, a unique denomination of the profile would facilitate mobility of workers (transnational, national, internal...). Considering the high mobility registered in the labor market and within the low skilled and not qualified workers, the harmonization of the profiles adopted in different countries for the elementary occupation (and within level 1 and 2 of the EQF) would contribute for the European common framework for low skilled. In particular, ENVOL used ISCO (integrated also in the ESCO classification) to define a common profile for an elementary professional role: a test has been performed by partners regarding the profile of kitchen-helper, using the ENVOL model to select and describe the units of competences that could correspond to this profile, resulting in a profile description that was compliant with the EQF level 2 (see Introduction).
- **HARMONIZE TEMPLATES** for the **MINIMUM CERTIFIABLE ELEMENT**: adopt in all Countries the same template for the description of the units of competence, ensuring that all the necessary elements that enable the positioning of the unit of competence in the EQF scale are properly made explicit. Partners suggest adopting the "minimum certifiable element" template developed by ENVOL partners (see Intellectual Output n.3).

Key verb: ARTICULATE

- **ARTICULATE COMPETENCES** like **TOP-DOWN APPROACH** from economic sector: production processes and key activities in an economic sector should be taken as the starting point for the creation of a common repertoire of "units of competences" for all EU Countries, that can be combined to compose professional profiles and qualification/training courses.
- **ARTICULATE LEVELS** of **PROFICIENCY** for competences: set a range of declinations of the competences on consecutive EQF levels (explicitly indicated) to graduate the proficiency in the application of the competence in an incremental scale of width, depth, autonomy, responsibility, complexity of work/study activities. ENVOL partners have designed an example of this articulation of some units of competences on progressive levels of proficiency from level 1 to 2 in IO3. The same principle is used also in Digi.Comp. repository, where all the digital competences have been declined on 8 levels of proficiency.

Key verb: ENABLE

- **ENABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES POSITIONING** on the **LOWEST LEVELS EQF**: Encourage the positioning of LEARNING OUTCOMES at level EQF 1 and encourage the bodies entitled for designing qualification standards to develop profiles on the lowest levels of qualification in cooperation with stakeholders (economic sector representatives, social parts, institutions...).
- **ENABLE POSITIONING** of **TRAININGS** by **NON-FORMAL TRAINING ORGANISATIONS**: allow the non-formal training organizations implementing a specific methodology -adapted to their own trainees but related to the guidelines for the design of Learning Units (see template from IO3) in order to reach standards given by their NQF- to position their training within this NQF to empower trainees & encourage upskilling pathways.

Key verb: DEVELOP

- **DEVELOP TOOLS** such as GUIDES/GLOSSARIES/CHECK LISTS: provide tools that support the operators in understanding and using the EQF and NQF descriptors for positioning training and learning outcomes at the proper level. An example can be the IO3 developed by ENVOL partners, that guides the operators in the training system and the operators of the system of identification, recognition, validation and certification of competences in their work to better manage and perform their tasks in design and certify learning outcomes at the lowest EQF levels, through a set of supporting flow-chart, check lists, tables, explanations.

- DEVELOP the USE of **MICROCREDENTIALS** as part of the **QUALIFICATION SYSTEM**: Develop and integrate the use of micro-credentials as part of the qualification system to better reflect modularization of learning pathways, help individuals obtain recognition of their knowledge, skills and competences and motivate lifelong learning behaviour. The template developed by ENVOL partners identifies units of competences that are able to be certified by themselves and reflect the principal of the organization of modularization of learning paths. Each unit of competence can be a part of a qualification and be developed and integrated in the micro-credentials principle.

Key verb: TRAIN

- TRAIN **OPERATORS** in charge of **MAINTENANCE of REPOSITORIES OF QUALIFICATIONS / COMPETENCES**: strengthen capability in the application/use of NQF / EQF levels in the design / review of minima certifiable elements (Units of Competences) with compliance to the EQF descriptors.
- TRAIN **OPERATORS** in charge of the **PROCESS of IDENTIFICATION, RECOGNITION, VALIDATION AND CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCES**: strengthen capability in the analysis of work/life experiences that can enable learning outcomes and the emersion of evidence of the competences/skills/ knowledge acquired and their referencing to standards of competences.

Key verb: INFORM

- INFORM **LOW SKILLED PUBLIC** about the possibility to have their **LEARNING OUTCOMES** from **LIFE/WORK EXPERIENCE** valorised:
 - disseminate the information about the possibility to access services for the identification, recognition, validation and certification of competences;
 - align all services targeting low skilled adults offering efficient and integrated guidance services and making available validation of non-formal and informal learning;
 - raise awareness through campaigns to promote the importance for lifelong upskilling pathways.

CONCLUSIONS

The above recommendations are the result of what emerged from the analyses carried out by the ENVOL project partners, regarding the valorisation of the EQF level 1 and 2 vocational competences, in particular (but not only) in their Countries.

They would like to contribute to solve some of the issues that hinder the recognition of vocational competences (above all the low-level ones), acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning experiences.

The recommendations propose a set of possible changes that together could lead to:

- ✓ a greater uniformity of the NQFs, so that all of them include the same 8 EQF levels and the development of standards of competences for each level so that each L.O. can be positioned, from EQF level 1 to 8;
- ✓ a best harmonization of the Country standards of competence and of professional profiles (names, structure and definitions), in order to make the recognition process easier and more transparent, even across Countries, both of single competences and of professional profiles;
- ✓ the development of systems which include also micro-credentials to make possible the recognition even of parts of a competence and the scalability of different levels of proficiency for certain competences (as already happens for languages and digital skills, for example);
- ✓ a better know-how of operators of competence standards maintenance and of the recognition process;
- ✓ an efficient diffusion of this opportunity, as a way to support inclusion and facilitate access/re-enter into education and training and career opportunities for a wider range of learners, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (such as people with disabilities, the elderly, low-qualified/skilled people, minorities, people with migrant background, refugees and people with fewer opportunities because of their geographical location and/or their socio-economically disadvantaged situation).

An Erasmus + "Strategic Partnerships in Adult Education" project in partnership with:

 <p>AID Actions Intégrées de développement</p>	<p>Belgium: Coordinator</p>
 <p>EFAS Castilla-La Mancha y Madrid</p>	<p>Spain: Partner</p>
 <p>SANTA CASA Misericórdia de Lisboa</p>	<p>Portugal: Partner</p>
 <p>SCf SCUOLA CENTRALE FORMAZIONE</p>	<p>Italy: Partner</p>
 <p>Erasmus+</p>	<p><i>This project has been co-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.</i></p>