Polish Qualifications Framework as a tool for modern qualifications system in Poland

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The national and international context of reforms

- European Union policy - the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- International mobility of workers and students
- Need for increase LLL participation of adults
- Labour market mismatch and lack of practices to develop and update qualifications
- No coherent qualifications system

PQF as a reform tool:
towards qualifications system in Poland allowing to better respond to labour market needs
Main features of qualification system in Poland before present reforms

- Different, not integrated subsystems of qualifications
- Is/was based mainly on teaching and teaching content
- Validation and recognition of learning outcomes achieved outside formal education very much limited
- Rigid system, difficult to adjust quickly to the needs of the market economy
Why a new qualifications system in Poland?

- In the light of challenges that the world and Poland are facing, such as:
  - Demographic change
  - Globalisation
  - Technological change

- Poland needs „Dynamic-oriented tool with vision” – mean to reform the approach to learning:
  - Focusing on learning outcomes
  - Linking education and labour market requirements
  - Coherent approach to formal, non-formal and informal learning
  - Improving mobility: both in terms of professions as well as geographical (including EU)
Main elements constituting the qualifications system:

- The Polish Qualifications Framework
- National qualifications register
- Validation
- Credit accumulation and transfer
- Quality assurance

Complementary reforms:

- New secondary VET curricula based on learning outcomes
- External examination system
- Qualifications Framework for Higher Education
- General education curricula based on learning outcomes
PQF model – defining and development

1st stage:
• Development of a draft of PQF

2nd stage:
• Consulting and creating final PQF, assessing substantial and institutional requirements of PQF implementation
• Development of the referencing report PQF to EQF

3rd stage:
• Implementation of PQF as a basis for comprehensive qualifications system
The Polish Qualifications Framework

- Comprehensive, reforming framework
- 8 levels of qualifications
- 3 categories of descriptors of learning outcomes:
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Social competences
- 3 degrees of generic descriptors
### Structure of descriptors in the Polish Qualifications Framework

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- Appropriate for general education
- Appropriate for vocational education
- Appropriate for higher education
PQF – our approach

- **Research**, results feed into developing evidence and good practice based qualifications system in Poland (including non-formal and informal learning)

- **Social debate**, allows to take into account positions of different stakeholders (including VET and TVET representatives) and using their experiences

- **Experts knowledge**, both national and international
Poland – learning outcomes in general education

- 2009 wave of reforms, following earlier changes
- new core curriculum - based on learning outcomes
- compulsory education at the age of 6
- compulsory pre-school education for 5 years olds
- individual approach to teaching - special attention given to talented students and to the students with learning difficulties
Secondary VET reform

- New professions, updated content of qualifications
- Described using learning outcomes and structured in sets:
  - common for all qualifications
  - common for groups of qualifications
  - specific for a qualification
- Enabling non-formal provision and validation of outcomes of non-formal and informal learning
- Examination of smaller entities
- Compatible with qualifications framework
- Credit transfer and accumulation-friendly structure
Secondary VET qualifications structure

Diploma in profession (compound qualification)

Qualification certificate (constituent qualification)

Qualification certificate (constituent qualification)

School leaving certificate

Unit of learning outcomes

Unit of learning outcomes

Unit of learning outcomes

Unit of learning outcomes

Unit of learning outcomes
Context of the comprehensive reform – educational aspiration

- Significant growth of citizens' educational aspirations in 1993 - 2009:

- 91% of adult Poles believe that it is important to get an education, of which 68% are strong supporters of this idea.
The approach to define learning outcomes in HE in Poland

- The Working Group on NQF in Poland proposed a multi-level approach to defining the learning outcomes in higher education.

- On central/national level learning outcomes are defined for two (first and second) cycles of studies, which:
  - are consistent with National Qualification Framework
  - have generic character, i.e. form a basis for more detailed learning outcomes for specific curricula.
Multi-level approach to define learning outcomes

**Central level**
- National Qualification Framework

**Domain level**
- Developed by domain experts on national level (all higher education covered by 8 domains)

**Fields of studies**
- Developed on the university and/or faculty level

**Study programme and courses**
- Developed at the faculty level
Domains of learning outcomes in HE

- 8 domains of learning outcomes in HE refer to 8 knowledge areas used in the legislation on higher education in Poland, including:
  - Humanities
  - Social sciences
  - Mathematics and science
  - Environmental studies
  - Engineering and technology
  - Medical studies
  - Agriculture, forestry and veterinarian studies
  - Arts

- Proposals use international standards and international experiences (such as the UK Subject Benchmark Statements)
Format of defining learning outcomes

- It is assumed that system and area learning outcomes are set on central level as a part of higher education regulation in Poland

- This means:
  - Moving from current rules of standardising faculty studies standardising learning outcomes covering knowledge, skills and personal and social competences in areas
  - Resignation from the central list of faculty names
  - Enabling higher education institutions to develop their autonomous curricula in areas, in line with defined standards
Recommendations to develop learning outcomes for specific curricula

- International projects and networks
  - For example: Tuning Educational Structures in Europe
  - European Civil Engineering Education and Training

- Book: „Autonomy in programm development for higher education institutions. Qualifications framework for higher education”

- Broad debate through series of conferences / seminars preceeding regulatory changes within the scope of the project „National Qualifications Framework in higher education as a tool to improve quality of education”
Trust building

- Defining area learning outcomes by recognised groups of experts from major academic institutions in Poland

- Broad public debate with higher education institutions representatives across Poland
Qualifications in LLL

- Introducing new quality to training sector

- Qualifications entered into qualifications registry should:
  - Specify learning outcomes
  - Have transparent validation procedures
  - Have established quality assurance system
  - Be meaningful from the perspective of labour market and/or personal development

- Levelling of qualifications done in co-operation with all interested stakeholders
Summary

- PQF development created an impulse to modernise all areas of education and life-long learning system in Poland.
- Reforms are already advanced in general education, VET and higher education.
- Changes in non-formal sector are in the pipeline:
  - learning-outcomes approach
  - standards in validation
  - standards in quality of qualifications
- Important innovation: participatory process of planning and implementing changes supported by research and expertise.
Main features of desired qualification system in Poland after present reforms

- Fully integrated transparent system,
- Based on learning, learning outcomes and learning assessment,
- Every qualification reachable by formal, non-formal and informal learning, validation and recognition,
- Enough flexible to adjust to new needs of society and economy.
Thank You!