



# ***ECVET and the links to other European lifelong learning initiatives***

***Thessaloniki 12 February 2007***

***Jens Bjornavold***

**European centre for development of  
vocational training (Cedefop)**





# *Lifelong learning in Europe; positive diversity or negative fragmentation?*

**European lifelong learning, including VET, is extremely diverse and partly fragmented**

**Barriers between countries, regions, qualifications systems, institutions and sectors prevent transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes; makes it difficult to use existing qualifications and competences optimally**

**We tend to value learning contexts rather than learning outcomes; where and how counts more than what you have learned**



# *Lifelong and lifewide learning*

**2001 Commission communication on lifelong learning; based on an extensive Europe wide consultation, insists on the importance of *lifelong and lifewide* learning**

**Points to *the lack of a comprehensive framework supporting transfer of qualifications* – between levels of formal education and training or across institutional, sectoral or national borders**

**Points to the crucial importance of valuing learning outcomes; irrespective of their origin in *formal, non-formal or informal settings***



## ***Mutual trust as a condition for transfer and recognition of qualifications***

***‘We want to increase voluntary co-operation in VET to promote mutual trust, transparency and recognition of qualifications and competences; to increase geographical mobility and access to lifelong learning...’ (Copenhagen Declaration 2002)***

***‘We want to see how transparency, comparability, transfer and recognition of qualifications and competences can be promoted by the development of reference levels, principles for certification and credit transfer....’ (Copenhagen Declaration 2002)***



## *European developments 2002-2007; main instruments and initiatives*

**European Qualifications Framework  
National Qualifications Frameworks**

**Common principles/frameworks for quality assurance for  
VET and Higher Education**

**Common principles on validation of non-formal learning**

**Europass**

**ECVET**



# *European Qualifications Framework (EQF)*

- Triggered by the Copenhagen declaration 2002
- Taken forward by Cedefop study 2003/2004 on common reference levels for education and training
- Rapid development; final approval expected 2007

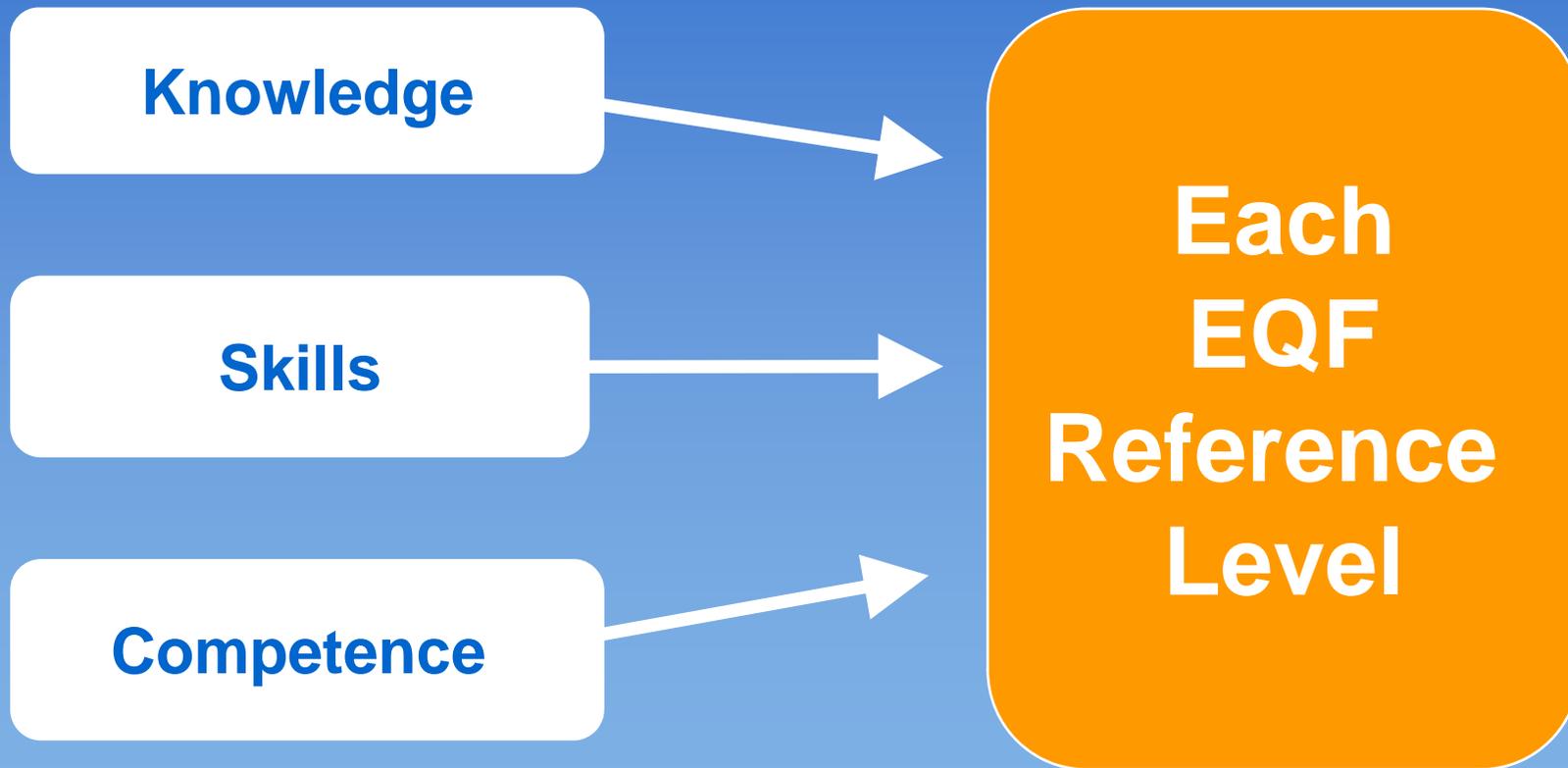
*Translation device  
for comparing qualifications*

*Neutral reference point  
and a system for  
placing and positioning  
of qualifications*



# Eight EQF Levels

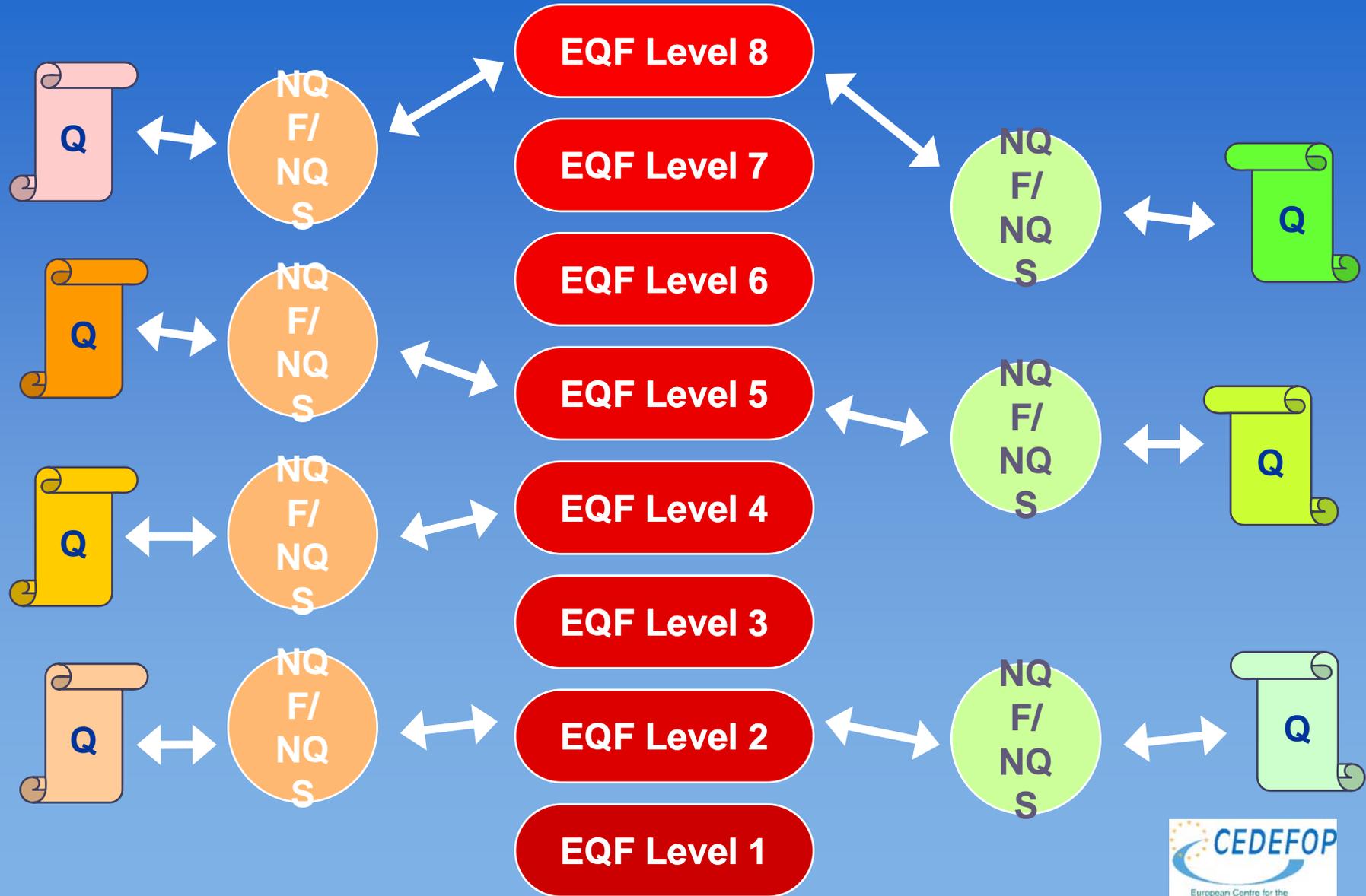
covering the full span of qualifications from basic to the highest academic and professional qualifications





# Country A

# Country B





# *EQF; key features*

**Reference levels cover the entire scope of qualifications, both academic and vocational – establishes a meta framework**

**All 8 levels cover general academic as well as vocational and professional qualifications**

**EQF is explicitly linked to quality assurance; mutual trust can not be achieved without transparent QA arrangements**

**EQF opens up, by referring to learning outcomes - to recognition of non-formal and informal learning**

**EQF addresses the comparison of qualifications between and within countries**



# *National Qualifications Frameworks; the snowball effect....*

**2006**

Ireland, UK, Malta and France have already developed NQFs

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Rep., Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Rep. and Turkey have committed themselves to develop a NQF:

Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and Sweden have taken first steps towards NQFs or are considering this

**2007?**



# *Why National Qualifications Frameworks?*

## **NQFs address the need**

- to establish national standards for learning outcomes;
- to promote a coherent national approach to quality of education and training provision;
- to act as a way of relating qualifications to each other;
- to promote access to learning, transfer of learning and progression in learning



## ***2007 and onward; testing the link between EQF and NQFs***

***Member States to refer their qualifications levels by  
2010***

***Testing of the relationship between EQF and  
Member States' qualifications started 2007, already  
12 projects running***

***Inclusion of sectoral qualifications a priority for  
next call for proposals May 2007***



## ***European principles (2004) for recognition and validation of non-formal learning***

- ***Systems should be underpinned by quality assurance.***
- ***Validation must be voluntary and the privacy of individuals should be respected***
- ***Equal access and fair treatment should be guaranteed***
- ***Systems should contain mechanism for guidance and counselling of individuals***
- ***The process, procedures and criteria for validation must be fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance.***
- ***Systems should respect the legitimate interests of stakeholders and seek a balanced participation.***
- ***The process of validation must be impartial and avoid conflicts of interest.***
- ***The professional competences of those who carry out assessments must be assured***



# *National systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning*

- **Majority of EU Member States are moving from experimentation to permanent systems for validation**
- **European principles have been used by a number of countries (Irl, NL, BE, No, DK etc) in developing national systems**
- **An ongoing process to further develop and implement European principles at national level**
- **An acceptance that a common approach to quality assurance is important in this field to allow for transparency and transfer**



# *European LLL initiatives; rhetoric or real change*

**An extensive voluntary cooperation including all relevant stakeholders**

**A comprehensive, overarching European framework is being set up - and welcomed**

**Rapid national reform in response to the European framework**

**A growing acceptance of the need to value learning irrespective of the context where it was acquired**

**A general shift from learning inputs to learning outcomes taking place**



# *A requirement for opening up to lifelong and lifewide learning*

## **INPUT BASED**

- + duration
- + type
- + location
- + programme
- + institution

**Towards**

## **OUTCOME BASED**

**What an individual is  
expected to know or be  
able to do at the end of  
a learning experience**