



Skills and competences for **mobility** in a competitive **Europe**



WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE EU

report



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In Society sprl
Sustainable Advisory Services

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1. *The member States bind themselves to renounce any restriction based on nationality against the employment in the coal and steel industries of workers of proven qualifications for such industries who possess the nationality of one of the member States; this commitment shall be subject to the limitations imposed by the fundamental needs of health and public order.*
2. *In order to apply these provisions, the member States will work out a common definition of specialities and conditions of qualification, and will determine by common agreement the limitations provided for in the preceding paragraph. They will also work out technical procedures to make it possible to bring together offers of and demands for employment in the Community as a whole.*
3. *In addition, for the categories of workers not falling within the provisions of the preceding paragraph and where an expansion of production in the coal and steel industries might be hampered by a shortage of qualified labour, they will adapt their immigration regulations to the extent necessary to eliminate that situation; in particular, they will facilitate the re-employment of workers from the coal and steel industries of other member States.*
4. *They will prohibit any discrimination in remuneration and working conditions between national workers and immigrant workers, without prejudice to special measures concerning frontier workers; in particular, they will work out among themselves any arrangements necessary so that social security measures do not stand in the way of the movement of labour.*

(Article 69 – Treaty of Paris, 1951)

ABSTRACT

The removal of obstacles to the free movement of persons and services between Member States is one of the objectives of the European Union as stated in the Treaty of Rome. Free movement of workers is also a prerequisite for the Lisbon Strategy in enhancing the Union's competitiveness and social cohesion. One of the key elements in mobility between Member states is the full recognition of qualifications and competences. The development of the European Qualification Framework is a major process aimed at making qualifications usable and intelligible across national borders.

EUROCADRES together with its partners, CEPLIS and national affiliates to EAPM, developed a conceptual model based on the European Qualification Framework to contribute to the full recognition of individual qualifications and competences, regardless of where and when these are acquired. Through national seminars in four EU countries, a European conference and a survey of its members, this conceptual model was evaluated and debated. The project established a clear view and understanding of national developments and challenges, providing *EUROCADRES* and the project partners with useful information for future policy and projects.

It appears that the members of *EUROCADRES* show great interest in European developments with regard to the transparency of qualifications and the monitoring of on- the-job training. In the different European countries, all social partners are to some extent involved in national developments with regard to the European Qualification Framework. With their work at national level, and in the course of this project, various observations and problems were discussed. It appears that there is much support for further exchange of experiences and information at European level. The monitoring of on-the-job training and validation of informal and non-formal learning is very important to the members of *EUROCADRES*. They see this as one of the major priorities for the future. The quality and quantity of mobility in the European Union is also seen as important. Development of the concept of and criteria for «fair» mobility as a means of achieving more and better mobility is considered an important element for social dialogue at European level. The results of this project give *EUROCADRES* political and practical suggestions for its policy for the coming years.



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FOREWORD

For *EUROCADRES*, “Skills and competences for mobility in a competitive Europe” is not merely the title of an important, albeit short-lived project, but rather a long-term commitment to provide European Professional and Managerial Staff with career-facilitating mobility opportunities, and to enable Europe to capitalise on their professionalism.

Since the very beginning, the free mobility of citizens and workers has been a fundamental aim of the European Union. In recent years the lack of mobility in the EU compared to the USA has been a competitive disadvantage. For many workers, mobility is a problem-- sometimes a very serious one. For the majority of highly qualified P&MS, however, it is a useful target for career progress. The EU has not yet removed the obstacles hindering mobility, stemming from the different labour legislations and the recognition of qualifications between the member states, however, although EURES is a good start.

For these reasons *EUROCADRES*, in partnership with CEPLIS and affiliated nationally to the EAPM, has managed this project, with backing from the European Commission.

With the following final report sets out the results of studies and of many meetings focused in particular on the development of a system for the recognition of professional qualifications at European level so as to overcome the present situation, where every national state still has its own system, different from and often contradictory to the other ones.

EUROCADRES, together with the professional associations, wants to have the European Professional Cards issued and provide P&MS with them.

That calls for building a common language at European level, so as to be able to understand and include the national systems and to be understood and readable in the different members states.

Starting from the EQF system, it is necessary to involve the social partners and to put the cards in the European social dialogue framework.

The report cites the “four pillars” of learning, as defined by Jacques Delors: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. The work, and especially the knowledge work characterizing the P&MS, spans and consolidates all those pillars.

A greater role of and more mobility for P&MS can be crucial for revitalizing the aims of Lisbon strategy on the knowledge society -- aims concerning education, research, innovation, which the present global economic and social crisis makes more difficult to attain, but also more necessary and even vital for Europe.

Carlo Parietti, President



1. BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

1.1. General

Since the inception of the European Union, the free movement of workers has always been a crucial issue of the Union's development. The Treaty of Paris (1951) establishing the European Coal and Steel Community established a right to free movement of workers in these industries. In 1957 the Treaty of Rome provided for the free movement of workers within the European Economic Community. The initial motivation was primarily economic. Mobility was linked to a person's status as a salaried worker and it was part of the broader project of developing a common market with free movement of labour, capital, goods and services (the so-called four freedoms). Over the years this right was extended to self-employed persons and service providers. Subsequently, family members were also entitled to the same rights. This right has progressively been extended to all categories of citizens. Consequently, the European Union has undertaken several initiatives to enhance the mobility of its citizens: EUROPASS, the Bologna Process, Blue Card, EURES, European Qualification Framework (EQF) and other relevant directives (2006/123/EC, 2005/36/EC)¹.

In a Europe without internal borders and competing in a global economy, the changing demands of an ageing society and a labour market in constant evolution require much greater levels of mobility. Worker mobility is seen as a

¹ There is no general overview of all mobility measures and agreements of the European Union. The different directorates-general of the European Commission have their own initiatives and regulations.

key instrument for an efficiently functioning single market and is considered essential to allow more people to find better employment, a key objective of the Lisbon Strategy.

However, worker mobility in the EU remains relatively low. Around 2% of working-age citizens from the 27 EU Member States currently live and work in another Member State. By comparison, the respective share of third-country citizens residing in the EU is almost twice as high². In line with the Lisbon Strategy, the European Union tends to benchmark its performance on the United States, where worker mobility is twice as high³.

This low mobility rate can partially be explained by a number of barriers. Aside from an uncertainty over the advantages of being mobile, mobile workers face a number of hurdles to free movement. These can range from legal and administrative obstacles, housing costs and availability, employment of spouses and partners, portability of pensions, linguistic barriers, and issues on the acceptance of qualifications in other Member States. This project focuses on the last of these obstacles: the recognition and transferability of qualifications.

1.2. Previous projects

The Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff *EUROCADRES*, the European Council of the Liberal Professions *CEPLIS* and *AIDP* (Associazione Italiana per la Direzione del Personale), representing the European Association of People Management (*EAPM*), are convinced that the recognition and transferability of qualifications, skills and competences play an important role in the integration of mobile workers within Europe. However, the transparency of qualifications is lacking within and between Member States as well as between education and training systems and lifelong learning. Furthermore, the concept of qualifications should also include competences and skills acquired through informal channels such as lifelong learning or training, as well as language skills, social experiences and others.

2 Source: European Commission – European Labour Force Survey 2005

3 Source: ‘Labour markets in the 21 st Century’, a joint US & EU conference, US Department of Labor, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, September 2002

EUROCADRES has already worked on the issue of recognition of professional qualifications through its involvement in the EU project on a European professional card (2006-2008). Together with FEANI (European Federation of National Engineering Associations), *EUROCADRES* established a concept for engineers and other professions in Europe that visualizes qualifications using the concept of professional cards, as introduced in Directive 2005/36 on the recognition of professional qualifications. The project was the first step for the future creation of European and National Professional Card Committees (EPCC and NPSS), which will be set up at European and national level to provide information and guidance to those applying for a European professional card.

The concept will be the subject of future discussions and debates in the European social dialogue. The social partners will be closely involved in developing and promoting the final results. Together with professional organisations, higher education organisations and other public representatives, *EUROCADRES* will build a common system of descriptors for the different individual qualifications, open to all professions.

Two other mobility initiatives were also conducted between 2006 and 2008. One EU project tackled “*Mobility and career development for professional and managerial staff*”. In this project *EUROCADRES* examined difficulties convincing P&MS of the advantages of working in another country. The decision to work in another country depends on a number of conditions, many of which are related to career development, the individual’s psychological motivation and the company culture. *EUROCADRES* looked at the attitudes and problems of small and medium-sized enterprises together with a partner organization UNIZO, the Flemish representative of SMEs in charge of Eures Channel Coordination, a network of approximately 500 consultants across Europe. It was set up by the European Commission with the aim of encouraging the free movement of workers within the European Economic Area and improving the use of available resources.

The other project, conducted under the “*EUROCADRES EURES – Activity plan for mobility*” focused on mobility and young professionals. *EUROCADRES*, together with its member organisations, its network of trade union mobility advisers and its graduates’ platform StartPro that links students with professional life, discussed and defined bottlenecks and surpluses when it comes to mobility of graduates and young professionals. Further, this project aimed at connecting the issues faced by young mobile professionals with the activities of EURES.

The results of all these initiatives taken by *EUROCADRES* made it clear that the success of the European Union depends on the progress of the social dimension. Mobility is more than the open flow of people across or within borders. Such flows must take place under fair conditions. This can only be achieved with a high level of activity from the social partners and positive development of the social dialogue at both European and national level.

1.3. Connecting EU initiatives

As explained in the general background (see 1.1.), the European Union has undertaken different initiatives and launched different processes to promote mobility and the mutual recognition of skills and qualifications. This *EUROCADRES* project was based on these initiatives and processes. Considering the large number of European Union initiatives, this brief overview is limited to the most recent and essential measures.

The overview opens with a description of the general European Union context, namely the Lisbon Strategy and particularly its educational component. Furthermore, two important processes in education are reviewed, the Bologna Process on Higher Education and the Copenhagen Process on vocational education and training. Different European tools and instruments related to the transparency of qualifications are then discussed. Since professional qualifications hold a special position, these are explained in more detail. All these elements are important stepping stones for the most recent European initiative, the European Qualification Framework, which is an important element of this project.

a. The Lisbon Strategy and the future objectives on education and training

Transparency of qualifications and the recognition of all kinds of learning, including on-the-job training, are two of the main features of this project. They are closely linked with the educational objectives defined by the European Commission in keeping with the Lisbon Strategy.

The Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, adopted in 2000, defines the common ambition of the EU “*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*”. Although this ambi-

tion is common knowledge, it is a deliberate choice to provide the full quote, since the underlined words are often neglected, even though they are essential to the project rationale.

To achieve this ambitious goal, the Heads of State and Government asked for “*not only a radical transformation of the European economy, but also a challenging programme for the modernisation of social welfare and education systems*”. They invited the Council of Education Ministers “*to undertake a general reflection on the concrete future objectives of education systems*”. In 2002, they went on to say that by 2010, Europe should be the world leader in terms of the quality of its education and training systems, which resulted in “*The Education and Training 2010 Work Programme*”.

In this work programme, the ministers of education agreed on three major goals to be achieved by 2010 for the benefit of citizens and the EU as a whole:

- to improve the quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems;
- to ensure that they are accessible to all;
- to open up education and training to the wider world.

The importance for this project of this work programme lies in the fact that it covers the various types and levels of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) and aims at making lifelong learning a reality.

b. Higher education, the Bologna Process

EUROCADRES represents professional and managerial staff, mainly highly educated employees. Higher education in Europe is undergoing major reform, the so-called Bologna Process. With regard to the transparency of qualifications acquired through higher education, this reform is relevant to the project and *EUROCADRES*. Moreover, *EUROCADRES* is involved in this Bologna process as an associated member.

In 1999 the ministers of higher education of 29 countries in Europe signed a declaration in Bologna (Italy) expressing and formalising their intention to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. The European Union should by that time be an open space with common references in terms of learning structures, credit use, quality evaluation, curriculum development and mobility of people and ideas. To meet these objectives European Union Member States must restructure their university systems by 2010, following the guidelines known as the Bologna Process.

The three priorities of the Bologna process are:

- The introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate)
- Quality assurance
- The recognition of qualifications and periods of study.

Since 1999, the Bologna process has resulted in several outcomes such as the introduction of the bachelor–master–doctorate structure, a European credit transfer system (ECTS), the use of diploma supplements and development of the Dublin Descriptors.

c. Vocational training, the Bruges-Copenhagen Process

The European Union has started a process of transparency of qualifications in higher education and also in vocational training. One of the main issues in the project is the European Qualification Framework (see below) that encompasses all levels of education, as well as vocational training and lifelong learning. Vocational education (or Vocational Education and Training, VET) prepares learners for careers that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic education and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation, hence the term, in which the learner participates. It is sometimes referred to as technical education, as the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology.

In October 2001 the directors-general of the EU Member States in charge of vocational training gathered in Bruges (Belgium) and took the initiative to start a bottom-up process to develop more concerted action in the area of vocational education. This Bruges initiative resulted in the Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced cooperation in European vocational education and training. This declaration was signed by the education ministers of 31 European countries and the European Commission. A key feature of this Bruges-Copenhagen process is that it was developed within the perspective of lifelong learning, emphasising the need for citizens to make use of the wide range of vocational learning opportunities available, for example at school, in higher education, at the workplace, or as part of a private course.

The following priorities were set:

- A single framework for transparency of competences and qualifications. The intention is to bring together existing transparency instrument into a single user-friendly and more visible format, for example the European CV, the certificate supplements and diploma supplements, Europass-

Training and the national reference points, possibly using the EUROPASS brand.

- System of credit transfer for vocational education and training (VET). Inspired by the successful European Credit Transfer System in higher education, the intention is to develop a similar system for the vocational sector.
- Common criteria and principles for quality in VET. Taking forward the work of the European Forum on Quality, a core of common criteria and principles for quality assurance will be developed. This could serve as a basis for European level initiatives such as quality guidelines and check lists for VET.
- Common principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The aim is to develop a set of common principles to ensure greater compatibility between approaches in different countries and at different levels.
- Lifelong guidance. The aim is to strengthen the European dimension of information guidance and counselling services, giving citizens improved access to lifelong learning.

d. Tools and Instruments

The processes described under points b. and c. above on higher education and vocational training have resulted in several tools and instruments aimed at enhancing the transparency and comparability of qualifications:

- the credit transfer methodologies for higher education (ECTS) and for vocational education and training (ECVET) between different countries.
- Europass intends to help people make their qualifications and skills better understood and recognised throughout Europe. The Europass service, provided through a network of national centres and an internet portal, provides a number of instruments to make this process easier, such as a CV Service (Europass CV and Europass Language Passport). Some Europass documents are to be issued by authorities: Europass Mobility, Europass Diploma Supplement and the Europass Certificate Supplement.

Another relevant European tool is the Eures-network. Set up in 1993, EURES is a co-operation network encompassing the European Commission and the public employment services of the EEA (European Economic Area) Member States (the EU countries plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and other partner organisations. The purpose of EURES is to provide information, advice and recruitment/placement (job-matching) services for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizen wishing to exercise the right to free movement of persons.

e. Professional Qualifications - Directive 2005/36

As mentioned above, *EUROCADRES* has been involved in the development of a professional card for engineers.⁴ That experience inspired this project. This directive (and others related to the mobility of services) is also very important for the project partner CEPLIS, the European Council of the Liberal Professions.

Professional qualifications hold a special position. Access to and exercise of some professions –typical examples are nurses, doctors, architects- are regulated and subject to the possession of a specific professional qualification. Directive 2005/36/EC, adopted in 2005, consolidates and modernises the rules currently regulating the recognition of professional qualifications.

In 2007, at the end of a transposition period, this Directive has replaced fifteen existing directives on recognition of professional qualifications. Through a network of National Contact Points (NCP) and based on a database, the recognition of professional qualifications should be facilitated.

The Directive introduces two specific approaches to the mutual recognition of qualifications:

- the establishment of platforms
- the development of professional cards

f. European Qualification Framework

At the time of the project (2008-2009), the members of *EUROCADRES* were to some extent involved in the implementation of the European Qualification Framework (EQF). This project aims to obtain a good idea of the national developments on this Framework, the involvement of trade unions and the challenges they face.

The European Qualification Framework is intended as a translation device, a reference point based on learning outcomes. The EQF is a common European reference framework which should link countries' qualifications systems, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more intelligible and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe.

4 See <http://www.feani.org/ENGCARD/PUBLIC/ENGCARD%20Leaflet.pdf>

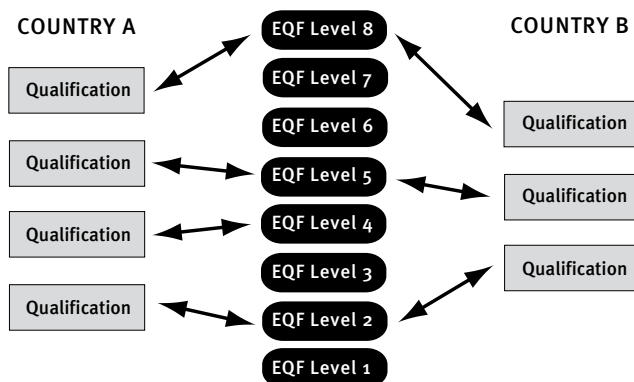
It has two principal aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and to facilitate lifelong learning. Many obstacles impede lifelong learning and mobility, some of which are closely related to the transparency of qualifications:

- differences between countries
- differences between education and training systems
- differences in approaches to informal and non-formal learning
- differences within one country, within the educational system (universities and other higher education establishments), between educational systems and sectoral initiatives, etc.
- the fact that learning becomes very individual, less predictable, less traditional.

So the need for a translation device, a framework to translate all kinds of qualifications, appears to be important for lifelong learning and greater mobility, from job-to-job in one country or between countries. EQF should facilitate this.

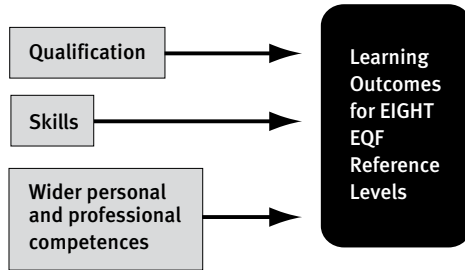
As an instrument for the promotion of lifelong learning, the EQF encompasses all levels of qualifications that have been acquired in general, thus including both vocational and academic education and training. Additionally, the framework addresses qualifications acquired in initial and continuing education and training, not only during a formal setting, but also informal learning, namely learning that occurs outside schools.

The EQF is a common European reference that consist of eight reference levels. The levels span the full scale of qualifications, from basic (Level 1, for example school leaving certificates) to advanced levels. Level 6 (bachelor), level 7 (master) and level 8 (doctorate) have their fundamentals in the Bologna Declaration. Again, EQF aims at all kinds of learning and qualifications.



The eight reference levels are described in terms of learning outcomes. The EQF recognises that Europe's education and training systems are so diverse that a shift to learning outcomes is necessary to make comparison and cooperation between countries and institutions possible.

In the EQF a learning outcome is defined as a statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do upon completion of a learning process. The EQF therefore emphasises the results of learning rather than focusing on inputs such as length of study. Learning outcomes are specified in three categories: knowledge, skills and competence. This means that qualifications—in different combinations—cover a wide range of learning outcomes, including theoretical knowledge, practical and technical skills, and social competences where the ability to work with others will be crucial.



Example of a learning outcome

Level 5	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are	comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change review and develop performance of self and others

The Recommendation on the EQF formally entered into force in April 2008. It sets 2010 as the recommended target date for countries to relate their national qualification systems to the EQF, and 2012 for countries to ensure that individual qualification certificates bear a reference to the appropriate EQF level. The recommendation should establish a common European reference which will link the various national qualification systems. By doing so it will facilitate greater communication between the national qualification systems.

By using learning outcomes as a common reference point, the Framework intends to facilitate comparison and transfer of qualifications between countries, systems and institutions. It could therefore be relevant to a wide range of users at European as well as at national level.

Most European countries have formally decided to develop National Qualification Frameworks reflecting and responding to the EQF. These decisions are important to ensure that this voluntary European process is properly anchored at national level. The development of NQFs since 2004 demonstrates the need for increased transparency and comparability of qualifications at all levels and shows that the basic principles underpinning the EQF are widely shared.

Some observe that EQF is the result of a combination of a European push for more integration and a national pull for reform of education and training systems. This closer relationship between countries' qualifications systems will have many beneficiaries. According to a European Union publication, the possible benefits are the following⁵:

- The EQF will support greater mobility of learners and workers. It will make it easier for learners to describe their broad level of competence to recruiters in other countries. This will help employers interpret the qualifications of applicants and so support labour market mobility in Europe. At a very practical level, from 2012 onwards all new qualifications should bear a reference to the appropriate EQF level. The EQF will thus complement and reinforce existing European mobility instruments, such as Europass, Erasmus and ECTS.
- The EQF should benefit individuals by increasing access to and participation in lifelong learning. By establishing a common reference point, the EQF will indicate how learning outcomes may be combined from different settings,

5 The European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), European Commission, 2008 - http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/eqf/broch_en.pdf

for example formal study or work, and from different countries, and can thus contribute to reducing barriers between education and training providers e.g. between higher education and vocational education and training, which may operate in isolation from each other.

- Also important in current times, the EQF can support individuals with experience from work or other fields of activity. It will do so by facilitating validation of non-formal and informal learning. The focus on learning outcomes will make it easier to assess whether learning outcomes acquired in these settings are equivalent in content and relevance to formal qualifications.
- The EQF will support individual users as providers of education and training by increasing transparency of qualifications awarded outside the national systems, for example by sectors and multinational companies. The adoption of a common reference framework based on learning outcomes will facilitate the comparison and (potential) linking together of traditional qualifications awarded by national authorities and qualifications awarded by other stakeholders. The EQF will thus help sectors and individuals to take advantage of this growing internationalisation of qualifications

The EQF is an ambitious and far-reaching instrument, which will have implications for education and training systems, the labour market, industry and commerce and citizens. The EQF is still fresh and appears remote from reality. The following example from the European Commission illustrates this:

“At present, an enterprise in France may hesitate to recruit a job applicant from, say, Sweden, because it does not understand the level of the qualifications presented by the Swedish candidate. But once the EQF is fully implemented, a Swedish person’s certificates will bear a reference to an EQF Reference Level. The French authorities will have already decided where their own national certificates in the field concerned lie. So the French enterprise would use the EQF reference to get a better idea of how the Swedish qualification compares to French qualifications.”⁶

But a lot of work has still to be done. The work has to be done at national level, by developing national qualification frameworks that link the national education training structure to this European framework. This decentralised approach makes it possible to involve a wide variety of stakeholders: educational institutions, the labour market, trade unions, employers etc.

6 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm

This decentralised approach nevertheless entails certain risks:

- at national level, discussions between education providers can cause great difficulties, e.g. between higher education and other education, or discussions between educational organisations and sectoral representatives.
- in this decentralised approach, the EU assumes that the eight levels are clear enough to link national qualifications in a proper way. If not, EQF is an empty box. If this linking is not properly done, the EQF will not have much credibility.

The establishment of the European Qualification Framework is essential to this project for two major reasons. First, the development of national qualification frameworks and the linking of the national frameworks with the European Framework is ongoing in the different member states. The knowledge and involvement of the social partners at national level is one of the main requirements of this project. Second, the transferability and legibility of qualifications within the European Union is the key feature of the EQF. The EQF encompasses all levels of education and all kinds of learning. For professional and managerial staff this could create tremendous opportunities, which prompted *EU-ROCADRES*' interest in learning to what extent trade unions (and PM&S) are involved in these developments, what challenges they face and what *EUROCADRES* can do to help them at a practical and political level.



2. PROJECT AIM AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1. Project aim

The overall project aim is to define *how EUROCADRES and its members can contribute to and benefit from a true and transparent concept of the recognition of professional qualifications and fair mobility in cooperation with the social partners on national and European level in the perspective of a social and open European labour market.* This definition has two main angles: the recognition of all qualifications and the concept of fair mobility.

EUROCADRES and the project partners are convinced that the recognition and transferability of employees' qualifications, skills and competences play an important role in the integration of mobile workers in Europe. However, there needs to be a true and transparent concept of recognition of different kinds of qualifications, including skills and competences acquired through informal learning and on-the-job training. The development of the European Qualification Framework and the ongoing national implementation processes are the essential reference points for the project. It raised the question of the extent to which the national members are aware and involved in these national implementations processes. It is highly relevant for *EUROCADRES*, as a European member organisation, to discuss and explore this topic and find out what the status questions, experiences, good practices and needs are. This was based on a broad view on qualifications, including all kinds of learning, in particular on-the-job training.

For *EUROCADRES* the quantity of mobility in the European Union is an important but limited indicator. Mobility should be seen by workers as a career opportunity, an advantage and an opportunity for personal enrichment. As a social partner, *EUROCADRES* considers the quality of mobility to be as important as the quantity. It therefore wished to explore the meaning of qualitative mobility or “fair mobility” and evaluate what practical and political initiatives are possible to raise the quality of mobility.

2.2. Comprehensive description

At the start of the project an overall conceptual model was developed for use during the project activities. This conceptual model was based on previous projects, European policy developments and the two main subjects of the project, recognition of all qualifications and fair mobility.

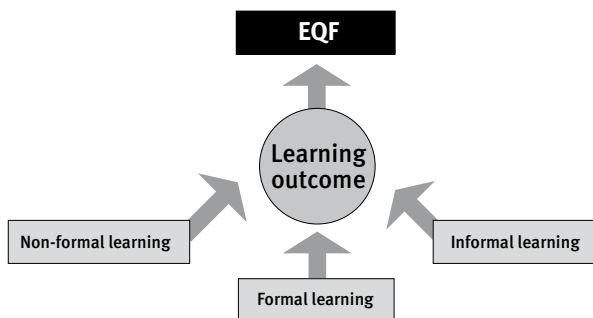
This conceptual model consists of four layers:

1. a European grid for the recognition of professional qualifications
2. the European Qualification Framework and its implementation at national level
3. monitoring of on-the-job training and competence cards
4. code of conduct for fair mobility



a. European Qualification Framework

To have a good understanding of this model, we take the European Qualification Framework as a starting point. As described, the European Qualification Framework is a meta-framework acting as a translation device between different national qualification frameworks. It is not intended as a framework to be implemented at national level. It will serve as a reference point to which national frameworks are linked. It consists of eight reference levels based on learning outcomes. A learning outcome is an innovative pedagogical approach and is a statement of what a learner knows and is able to do upon completion of a learning process. Learning outcomes combine knowledge, skills and wider professional and personal competences acquired in a formal, non-formal and informal setting.



The transparency of qualifications is one of the key elements to facilitate mobility across Europe, together with essential reforms in social security, health and tax systems. The philosophy of the EQF, encompassing all levels of qualifications and all kinds of learning, gets great support from *EUROCADRES*. This tool will then provide a common framework of references to describe qualifications which will help member states, employers and individual professionals to compare qualifications across Europe's diverse education and training systems and should provide a neutral reference point. The implementation of this important EU initiative in the member states is of great interest for greater recognition and transparency between national educational systems. It is of the utmost importance that national implementation is carried out in an easy understandable way. There is limited knowledge today on how the EQF is actually implemented.

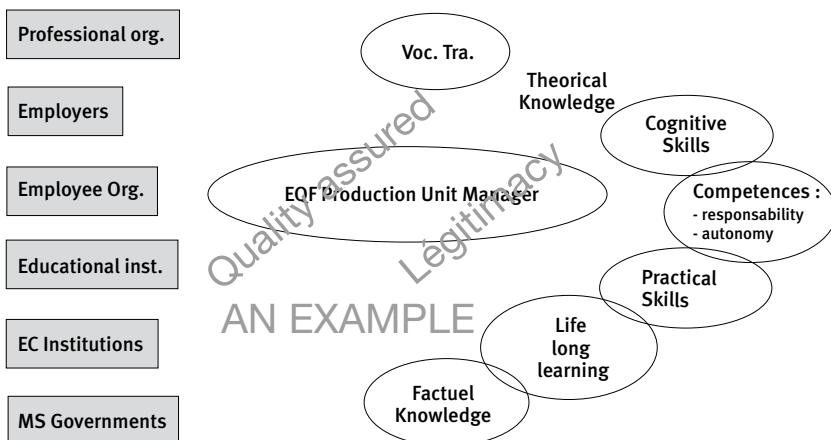
With this project *EUROCADRES* wants to raise awareness of the EQF in order to increase the level of knowledge and to assess the need for a more harmonized approach.

The project partners consider the general description of learning outcomes, regardless of sector or profession involved in the EQF, as possibly insufficient. It will (possibly) link 27 national systems. However it will lead to little or no similarities between those national systems. From the point of view of the project partners this raises crucial questions with regard to quality assurance and the legitimacy of the system. This leads to the conceptual development of the European grid.

b. A European grid for the recognition of professional qualifications

In addition to the EQF, a possible second layer was defined, namely a European grid for the recognition of professional qualifications. The general idea is to define professional qualifications or standards at a European level. This more sectoral approach, based on a multi-stakeholder dialogue, could include different kinds of learning (formal, informal and non-formal). For *EUROCADRES*, it is essential that qualifications are not only understood as evident competences acquired and recognized by a diploma, certificate or a reference letter from an employer. *EUROCADRES* finds that the concept of qualifications also comprises competences and skills acquired through informal channels such as lifelong learning or training as well as language skills, social experiences, etc.

An example of defining the professional qualifications of a Production Unit Manager based on a multi-stakeholder dialogue



Using this European grid, a more transparent system for assessing and describing different kinds of learning would be possible. A grid composed of European descriptors explaining the differences between the European professions seem a necessary step towards true free movement of professionals within the European Union. These descriptors for recognition of qualifications are quite simply translation tools of national differences into a comprehensive European language. This grid of professional qualifications is similar to the professional cards in Directive 2005/36 (see 1.3.e.). These cards are intended to serve as practical tools, developed with the sector, to visualize the skills and competences of a professional in a specific sector.

c. Monitoring of on-the-job training and competence cards

The philosophy of the European Qualification Framework is that learning takes place at all times and places. A description of one's competences, degrees, certificates and diplomas is important, but shows only one aspect of the acquired skills and competences, namely formal education. For a true and transparent concept of qualifications it is essential to look at what an individual has learned, no matter where he has learned it. These kinds of learning should be evaluated, recognized and documented.

As a social partner, *EUROCADRES* and its national members find it important that in the development of the national qualification frameworks Member States do not limit themselves to formal education. For *EUROCADRES* it is also important that on-the-job-training is validated and that employers accept their societal responsibility in this matter.

Describing one's competences can be done according to competences related to one's profession. In addition to professional competences, there are also general or key competences. The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 recognised that Europe faces challenges in adapting to globalisation and the shift to knowledge-based economies. It stated that *"every citizen must be equipped with the skills needed to live and work in this new information society"* and that *"a European framework should define the new basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning: IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills"*. In parallel with the further development of professional cards in Directive 2005/36 (see 1.3.e.), it could be relevant to develop a tool (a card) to describe one's general competences, no matter where they are acquired.

d. Code of conduct for fair mobility

The final layer of the project regards the concept of fair mobility. As described, *EUROCADRES* perceives mobility in relationship to competitiveness and to a more social Europe. Nowadays, mobility is too often perceived as forced and not as an opportunity. There are many obstacles and barriers with regard to mobility. The recognition of qualifications is one such obstacle. Besides other barriers (social security, wages, etc.) it is important to look at mobility from the point of view of the mobile worker. Under what conditions will he experience mobility as fair and not as being forced? What risks and guarantees should be addressed?

In developing the concept of fair mobility, the main focus was on practical and psychological obstacles to mobility, and on finding a concept that ensures respect for labour standards and legal requirements by all people involved in the mobility process. Geographical mobility has a bad image for the moment. The development of a code of conduct, combined with a 'fair mobility' brand, could help change the image of mobility.

Fair mobility should be an issue in national and European social dialogue. The development of a reference point ('a brand') could be useful for social partners but also for the individual mobile employee.



3. METHODOLOGY

The project partners did not intend to carry out extensive scientific research in all Member States. Given the limited budget and timeframe, four main project activities were developed to explore the opinions and experiences of members of *EUROCADRES* and the validity of the conceptual model.

3.1. Desk research and review of previous projects

As described in chapter 1, the rationale of the project was based on findings and experiences in previous projects in which *EUROCADRES* was involved. The conceptual model (see 2.2.) and the underlying assumptions are based on those experiences. During the project, additional desk research was undertaken in order to refine those concepts, to prepare the other project activities and to interpret some of the findings.

3.2. Four national seminars

Between September and November 2008 four national seminars were organized by *EUROCADRES*, respectively in Italy (24/9/08), Denmark (3/11/08), Romania (17/10/08) and Latvia (10/11/08). The selection of these countries was a guarantee of a good balance between new and old EU Member States and coverage of different geographical areas of Europe (north, south, east). Each seminar was attended by representatives of national trade unions, pro-

fessional associations and public administrators of the country involved. The organisation of the seminars was coordinated by *EUROCADRES* and its members in the countries involved.

The choice to organize national seminars had the intended advantage that participants were familiar with the subtleties of the national situation. Based on the conceptual model, each seminar focused on one or more of its specific elements relevant to the national situation. The fact that participants spoke the same language facilitated intensive and in-depth discussion among them. The Danish seminar was an exception to this approach, since it was organized with representatives of the different Nordic countries, with the exception of Iceland. During this seminar it was relevant to evaluate to what extent cooperation on a regional basis would be possible.

In appendix 1, the reader will find the list of participating organisations.

3.3. A European Conference

On 27 and 28 November 2008, around one hundred representatives of *EUROCADRES'* national members, the project partners CEPLIS and EAPM and other guests gathered in Brussels. During this European conference, the results of the national seminars were presented and discussed in several working groups.

The majority of EU countries were represented at this conference, making it possible to add other experiences and views to the project. The conference was not intended as the final project activity but as a forum where the conceptual model and preliminary results of the national seminars were discussed. It was also a forum to raise awareness of the transparency of qualifications and the issue of fair mobility. The exchange of ideas and experiences amongst the different countries and representatives of the different project partners made it possible to develop new ideas for projects and for further policy development.

The four layers of the project were discussed in the working groups. These discussions were based on the conceptual model and the results of the national seminars.

3.4. Survey

In January 2009 a questionnaire was sent out to all the members of *EUROCADRES*. This questionnaire was intended to gather additional information and views on national developments. It was also intended to see what future actions and initiatives of *EUROCADRES* and its national members could be valuable. Finally, the questionnaire was also a way to validate some of the project's interim conclusions.

Although the conceptual model consists of four layers, the questionnaire focused on only three elements, namely the European Qualification Framework, on-the-job training and fair mobility. This limitation was based on the fact that the proposed European grid for qualifications is the most conceptual of all and it is more difficult for national members to express an opinion on this subject. In addition, the aim was to evaluate actual national developments and this is not the case for the European grid. On each issue three similar questions were formulated: the involvement of social partners at national level, suggestions for practical projects or instruments to be developed and possible subjects for *EUROCADRES* to address at European level. Each question contained several suggestions based on the results of the seminars and the European conference.

The questionnaire was not intended to cover all countries, but to gather qualitative information and ideas on national situations. The additional remarks of the respondents were used while describing the results and drawing conclusions. Obviously the information gathered was treated confidentially.

In total we received feedback from 16 different organisations originating from 12 different countries (Estonia, Greece, Poland, Finland, Denmark, Bulgaria, Norway, Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Hungary, the Netherlands and Austria).

The questionnaire and the quantitative results are added to the report, see appendix 2.



4. RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the different project activities are described according to the four layers as defined in the conceptual model (see 2.2.). Not all the elements of the model have been discussed in detail. Since the European Qualification Framework is an actual development to be dealt with by the different social partners, it was given the most attention.

Like the description of the conceptual model (see 2.2.), this chapter starts with the EQF and subsequently describes the results of the other layers of the model.

4.1. European Qualification Framework and its implementation at national level

In general terms, all parties agree that the European Qualification Framework and its national implementation could have a positive effect on the transparency of qualifications throughout Europe. In theory, it can contribute to smoother and more transparent recognition of qualifications and hence facilitate the mobility of professional and managerial staff. The conceptual model of the EQF, based on learning outcomes and the combination of different kinds of learning (formal, non-formal and informal learning), is considered an asset by the members of *EUROCADRES*.

In the Nordic countries, there is a tradition of active involvement of the social partners in educational reforms. This is also the case with the European Qualification Framework, where the Nordic social partners are actively involved

through working groups in its development. The active involvement of the social partners in the Nordic Countries results from the Scandinavian social model, which features a high degree of social dialogue, unionism and a tradition of collective agreements. Unions in the Nordic Countries are also organised differently. Depending on the qualification level, there is a different union. In other countries there is less involvement in the development of the European Qualification Framework. Social partners usually are consulted. This was confirmed during the different seminars and again affirmed in the questionnaire.

In general *EUROCADRES*' members consider the active involvement of social partners at national level essential. These reforms should be the subject of social dialogue at European level as well.

The European Qualification Framework is a recommendation of the European Commission, hence it is a voluntary process. In practice, a lot of different national situations are encountered. In some countries, such as Denmark, an eight-level national framework is being developed. These are linked to the levels of the European Qualification Framework. In other countries, e.g. Sweden, no decision has been taken yet on participation in and development of a qualification framework. Among the different reasons mentioned is that the reforms in higher education resulting from the Bologna process were completed only recently and that for the moment there is not much interest in starting a new reform process.

In still other countries, e.g. Romania and Italy, there is great hope that implementation of the EQF will lead to the national reforms needed. As lifelong learning becomes more important, and as citizens require more flexible access and progress within education and training and the labour market, countries need to increase the transparency of qualifications and to clarify the relationships between them. The development of NQFs can be seen as a combination of a European push for increased cooperation and a national pull for reform.

Other countries intend to develop a national qualification framework, but with a different number of levels. They experience fundamental problems with the eight levels defined in the European Framework and are considering developing a more extensive framework, with twelve levels similar to the Scottish Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Twelve levels will make a more differentiated approach possible. In some countries, such as Italy and Belgium, education and training are regionalised and people in these countries experience a lack of transparency at national level. In those countries, the implementation

of a regional or national framework linked to the EQF would contribute not only to transnational transparency of qualifications but also to transparency at a national and regional level.

In general, these different situations raise the question whether the EQF will be implemented in some or in all countries, notwithstanding the way a national framework is developed. This leads to the fear that the European Qualification Framework could fail to achieve its purpose. If not all countries develop a framework linked to the EQF, or if there are many different approaches, will transparency be enhanced?

Quality assurance is another important issue. The EQF will be a translation device linking different national frameworks with each other. However, if the quality of those national frameworks is not guaranteed, the system will not work. If there are doubts about the way a country has linked its national framework to the EQF, other countries will not be willing to recognise the qualification level. More fundamentally, it is not automatically the case that when national qualifications are interlinked through the EQF, the quality of the educational system itself will be guaranteed. The Bologna process and the Copenhagen process on higher and vocational training (see 1.3.) are nonetheless addressing the issue of quality assurance of the respective educational systems.

In general, quality assurance at national level is a prerequisite for the legitimacy of the EQF. If countries have doubts about the quality of the national frameworks of other countries, the EQF will not work in practice.

The main purposes of the European Qualification Framework is to increase the transparency of qualifications, facilitate transnational mobility, stimulate lifelong learning and value all kinds of learning (see 1.3.). These objectives are fully supported by the members of *EUROCADRES*.

Practice shows however that the national qualification frameworks mainly deal with formal education. This is logical as it is easier to connect existing diplomas and degrees to a qualification framework. With regard to other kinds of learning, such as informal learning and on-the-job training, this is more difficult. That is mainly because of limited national practices with regard to the recognition and certification of other kinds of learning. Before one can involve other kinds of learning there is need for a national system that officially validates informal and non-formal learning. In many countries, such systems are being developed. This is taking place under the impetus of European educational policy. During the Latvian seminar, for example, the model for the

recognition of other kinds of learning in vocational training was discussed. For *EUROCADRES'* members, the value of informal and non-formal learning is important. These kinds of learning should be included in the different qualification frameworks. It is important that informal and non-formal learning are seen as relevant, even in the higher levels of the EQF. These levels are sometimes seen too exclusively as the prerequisite of formal higher education.

The European Qualification Framework is structured horizontally, combining knowledge, skills and competences and vertically with a hierarchy of levels (see 1.3.). To be “awarded” a certain level, one has to match the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) of that level. During the seminar in Denmark, the remark was made that not everybody achieves all the learning outcomes of a specific level. For example, an individual might have detailed knowledge of a certain subject, while at the same time lacking personal competences (a “nerd”). How does this individual fit into the model? Is there a possibility to create individual (diagonal) pathways?

Level	knowledge	skills	competences
6	x		
5		x	
4			x

In practice, a lot of problems are encountered (see below). During the national seminars, the European conference and in the answers to the questionnaire, a lot of participants expressed a need for training and awareness-raising on the European Qualification Framework. The exchange of experiences between the different countries was certainly seen as a necessity, since similar problems are encountered throughout Europe. This could be a task for *EUROCADRES*. Different problems and difficulties encountered in practice could be the subject of exchanges of experiences. In what follows, the problems mentioned above are described in more detail.

One of those problems is the generality of the learning outcomes in the EQF and the lack of criteria. The eight defined levels are experienced as rigid, inappropriate to specific national situations. For example, in Denmark there is a binary higher education system with a difference between professional and academic-oriented higher education. Each has a different purpose, which can-

not be reflected in the eight levels. Professional and academic bachelors for example are both level 6.

Additionally, sometimes this binary structure is limited to the bachelor-level, defining professional and academic bachelors. In those countries, a master level (level 7) is academic-oriented higher education, with no direct access from the professional bachelors. If this professional bachelor is attributed a level 6 in the EQF however, this should, according to the cumulative approach of the levels, give access to a level 7 (master) qualification.

A similar problem is encountered when one achieves an additional specialization in a certain level that is not equivalent to a higher level in the framework. Examples are a nurse who specializes in hospital management, or a teacher who follows additional courses to teach youngsters with mental dysfunctions. In both examples, these specializations are recognized in the national labour market but not reflected in the attributed EQF level. Both are also examples of the fact that the learning outcomes are general with no links to the profession or sector involved.

Finally, the introduction of learning outcomes is an innovative educational approach. Many people fear that educational practice is not aware of or ready for this change, even though the shift towards learning outcomes is important from the perspective of *EUROCADRES* and its members. Using learning outcomes means that the level of knowledge, skills and competences acquired are assessed and not according to the establishment where the learning took place.

Taking these results of the project on the EQF into account, one of the assumptions prior to the project is clearly affirmed. The generality of the EQF and its learning outcomes and the missing link to the sector or profession seem to create difficulties at national level. This made the project partners develop the idea of a European grid of qualifications (see 2.2.). How *EUROCADRES'* members assess this layer of the conceptual model is developed in section 4.2.

4.2. Grid for the recognition of professional qualifications

In the conceptual model developed at the beginning of the project (see 2.2.), the project partners assumed that there is need for a grid in which qualifications for different professions are described. Such a grid, based on a multi-stakeholder approach, would increase the legitimacy and quality of the Euro-

pean Qualification Framework. The learning outcomes in the European Qualification Framework are too general and have no link to sectors or professions. In section 4.1., the national experiences and problems described made this very clear.

In general the added value of a European grid describing professional qualifications is acknowledged. Some even consider it a necessity to have a working transparent system of qualifications. Practical experiences with the European Qualification Framework brought to light the fact that the learning outcomes are very general, that the link to professions or sectors is missing and that quality assurance is a prerequisite. Several *EUROCADRES* members see a European grid as a possible solution.

A European grid of professional qualifications and its development, if based on a multi-stakeholder approach, would also help bridge the gap between education and the labour market. The stakeholder dialogue between education and labour market (employers and employees) would bring the two worlds closer together. A European grid could lead to some kind of minimum European professional standard. In such a standard the minimum competences of a certain professional could be described in detail. This could be a perfect reference for the development of appropriate educational programmes, the transparency of professional qualifications and the validation of different kinds of learning. This requires of course the active involvement of all stakeholders. Based on the experience with professional cards, trade unions and professional associations could have an important role to play and should even take the lead in this development. The involvement of the social partners is essential to guarantee the rights of professionals. However, the involvement of employers and the educational sector is also essential. Many people doubt whether the latter will be sufficiently motivated to be involved, however.

During the seminars and the conference, the development of such a grid was seen as an enormous challenge and an expensive though necessary step. It is not clear whether this grid should cover all professions and sectors, or should be limited to representative professions. Choosing is losing, of course. Another remark made during the project with regard to feasibility has to do with the maintenance of such a grid, since the labour market, professions and sectors evolve constantly.

More fundamentally, in the discussions on this grid, several participants expressed their fear of further harmonization in Europe. If minimum professional

standards are developed at European level, this could lead to a process in which national economies, labour markets, educational systems, etc. will be required to meet these standards. This would lead to fundamental changes and a loss of national identity, according to some. On the other hand, transparency of qualifications is only possible if there is a minimum standard.

On a more practical level, there was great interest for the further involvement of *EUROCADRES* in the development of those professional cards. During the Italian seminar the ENG-CARD was presented. The ENG-CARD, a professional card for engineers, was developed by *EUROCADRES* and FEANI. It is considered a positive experience by members as well as the target group. Developing similar cards for other professions is seen as an opportunity. It is important that the social partners take a lead in this initiative, since they are in the best position to guarantee the rights of the individual professional.

For *EUROCADRES* and its members a major opportunity of the European Qualification Framework, the European grid and the professional is the validation of informal and non-formal learning. During the project these kinds of learning and their value were considered an important issue. In the following, we take a closer look at this topic.

4.3. Monitoring of on-the-job training and competence cards

For trade unions, informal and non-formal learning are very important issues. The members of *EUROCADRES* see this as a priority and as a major challenge for the future. It can contribute to mobility, employability and lifelong learning.

In practice, throughout Europe there are many different approaches. In some countries, such as Denmark, the recognition of non-formal and informal acquired competences is mainly used to increase employability and aimed at specific target groups and professions. In other countries, like France and Norway, individuals have the right to have their competences assessed and documented. This diversity and lack of common standards does not favour overall implementation and structural integration in the European Qualification Framework. European cooperation on this issue is seen as a priority. In the questionnaire several respondents suggested that a seminar on this topic would be useful. This could lead to a better understanding of the concept and strengthen the position at national level.

A common standard would be beneficial, however, since the development of such a system must fulfil a number of requirements. First, at a practical level, in order to recognize non-formal and informal learning there is a need for a valid and reliable methodology and reference (a standard) to evaluate one's competences. If other kinds of learning are validated, it is important to have an instrument or approach that correctly assesses the right competences. The introduction of learning outcomes is an important step forward, since learning outcomes describe skills, competences and attitudes regardless of the duration or location of the learning experience. The same observation was made, however, that learning outcomes are general with no link to sectors or professions.

There are also important political issues involved, the first of which is ownership of the system. In some countries the assessment is performed by educational institutions, in other countries by private organisations and in other countries it is organized by the government. During the project, several people suggested that trade unions could develop such a system as a new service for their members. This is a legitimate claim since trade unions protect the rights of employees and the validation of informal and formal learning must be beneficial for the individual.

In connection with ownership, there is also the issue of certification and its (possible) civil effect. The civil effect of certified informal and non-formal learning refers to the value that certificate has in society. The validation of other kinds of learning must create new opportunities for the individual, on the labour market and in lifelong learning. In some countries, the assessment of one's competences facilitates the persons' access to higher education, but has no effect or value on the labour market. Related to this is the question of what competences acquired through informal and non-formal learning should be assessed: professional or general competences. For trade unions it could be interesting to develop a method to assess general competences. Developing a variety of assessment instruments for the different professions is not realistic for *EUROCADRES* and its members. However, it is considered important for the social partners to be involved in such development at national level. In addition to professional competences, professional and managerial staff have general competences (e.g. the learning outcomes of the EQF). The social partners could develop a tool to validate these competences. This could be a new service for members.

With regard to on-the-job training, the involvement of employers is essential. They have to be willing to monitor and document the competences of their em-

ployees. This has to be done not only for the company's purposes, but also for the benefit of the individual employee. The employee should be entitled to use this information in order to develop his or her own career. In general, the participants believed that employers would be reluctant to participate out of fears of losing talented employees. In some sectors with strong regulations, employers will see it as an opportunity, but more for the company than for the benefit of the individual. This is however a very important topic for trade unions.

Although monitoring of on-the-job training is considered a very important development for the future, it is important to be aware that this is an instrumental (in some cases even strictly economic) approach to learning. Learning has more aspects that are equivalent. The holistic approach to learning as defined by Jacques Delors (the four pillars of learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be) have to be kept in mind¹.

The above developments and ideas should enhance the (free) mobility of employees within their own country and within the European Union. As the Lisbon Strategy (see 1.3.) sets the goal of the European Union becoming more competitive, a mobile workforce is of the utmost importance. A lot of initiatives have been taken to facilitate transnational mobility, of which transparency of qualifications is but one. However the mobility rate in the European Union is still low and research shows that actual mobility is often experienced as forced and not as an opportunity. During the project, the issue of mobility was also on the agenda. The project partners wanted to discuss and explore the issue of "fair" mobility. This topic is dealt with in the following section.

4.4. Fair mobility

EUROCADRES finds mobility to be an important issue and wanted to explore possible conditions to achieve more qualitative mobility and to deal with this issue in the European and national social dialogues.

The general idea that it is important for *EUROCADRES* and its members to address the issue of mobility is widely accepted and supported by the participants. The core of *EUROCADRES'* work should be the social aspects of mobility. This must encompass the quality of mobility but also its quantity. It is the

1 <http://www.unesco.org/delors/>

combination of quality and quantity that will lead to a true win-win situation for Europe.

All participants were unanimous on the fact that mobility should always be the choice of the individual. Moreover, professional and managerial staff should see mobility as an opportunity, an opportunity for new (learning) experiences and personal enrichment.

During the discussions at the national seminars and the European Conference, it was also stressed that mobility should create a winning situation for all parties involved: the mobile employee, his or her family, the company and society as a whole. Too often not all these perspectives are taken into account. Once the benefits for every party are clear, mobility will take place under better conditions.

During the seminars and the conference, the issues of brain drain, social dumping and migration were often mentioned. Contrary to what might be expected, brain drain was not seen as a problem during the Latvian seminar. On the other hand, the “net-balance” (outgoing-incoming) of mobility was an important topic during the Nordic seminar.

In the work on mobility, it is important for *EUROCADRES* and its members to consider the difference between mobility and migration, where mobility is limited in time and in the perspective of a return. During the conference, there were a number of comments on the notion of “fair” in connection with mobility. If *EUROCADRES* speaks about the need for more “fair” mobility in the future, this could suggest that present mobility is unfair. So it is very important to define precisely what criteria should be applied to mobility for it to be considered “fair”. A clear description of mobility and the development of criteria for “fair” mobility” is obviously a first task for *EUROCADRES*.

Besides these relevant discussions on concepts and definitions, several suggestions were made for putting “fair” mobility into practice.

One of the respondents to the questionnaire suggested that criteria for fair mobility negotiated at European level could be a very valuable reference for negotiations during social dialogue but also for the individual. A standard could enforce the negotiation capacities at the collective and individual level. Another practical suggestion for *EUROCADRES* is the development of a catalogue of fair actions on mobility. The collection and exchange of good practices at national level could be a source of inspiration for members and would enhance the transparency of the model.

An employee who has the possibility or the intention to be mobile is confronted with a lot of practical matters, making mobility a serious decision. Perhaps it could be possible to negotiate a sabbatical leave for those who want to try a mobility experience. This leave creates a trial period, during which they can go back to their old workplace without any consequence.

Similar to the sabbatical, there was the suggestion of a European mobility fund. This fund, similar to Erasmus for higher education, could offer the possibility for organisations to apply for resources when they want to send someone abroad. This grant could stimulate organisations to promote mobility, but also provide funding for the mobile employee. The grant should make it possible for the partner (and family) of the mobile worker to find a job in the same country. This would avoid a number of non-working “followers”, which is a waste of skills and resources.



5. CONCLUSIONS, POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND DISSEMINATION

5.1. Conclusions

a. General

At all levels it is important to keep the four pillars of learning in mind, as defined by Jacques Delors: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

The aim for *EUROCADRES* and its partners during the finalization of this project is to reach a level where we can present strong ideas for the future – areas of uncertainty that need to be clarified at European level.

It is imperative for the findings of this project to reach the public and Europe's decision-makers at all relevant levels. We are working for a social and competitive Europe and strongly believe that we are prepared to take another step. The financial crisis cannot be the sole issue on the European agenda, we also need proactive measures that can prepare and strengthen Europe for the future.

The areas addressed during this project are different but at the same time very closely linked. They cover education, training, competences and mobility, all of which are necessary for a truly open and social labour market, without too many barriers and combating discrimination, improving the situation of professionals and managers on the European labour market.

b. European Qualification Framework – from Europe to Member State

EUROCADRES and its members are very positive about the objective of the European Qualification Framework (EQF). The fact that it encompasses all levels of education and takes all kinds of learning into account is seen as a great asset.

In general, EQF is a voluntary process and has in practice many different approaches. This raises the question of the extent to which the system will work.

Many fundamental and practical problems are encountered:

- the general description of learning outcomes, the missing link to profession or sector and quality assurance are major concerns
- the lack of criteria for linking national systems to the EQF make implementation at national level difficult
- the eight levels are not refined enough to make essential differentiations. Eight levels covering all levels of education will create a rigid system. This makes it very difficult to place national particularities
- the introduction of learning outcomes is an innovative pedagogical approach. Many people fear that educational practice is unaware of and not ready for this change.
- the development of national frameworks is often limited to formal education. For *EUROCADRES* it is also important for on-the-job-training to be validated and for employers to accept their societal responsibility in this matter.

It is important to get involved in the national developments with regard to the European Qualification Framework for different reasons:

- the development of a national qualification framework in line with the EQF may cause structural changes in the national educational system. Sometimes this can lead to needed national changes. The development of a national qualification framework is more than a formal linking of existing practice.
- it is important for the development of a national framework not to be limited to formal education. The EQF is meant to encompass all kinds of education. The recognition of informal and non-formal learning, including on-the-job training, is an important opportunity for professional and managerial staff.

This is so not only from the point of view of transnational mobility, but also from that of career development and regional mobility.

c. Higher education and recognition, i.e. competitiveness

As an association representing professional and managerial staff it is important for *EUROCADRES* to closely monitor the educational policy of the European Commission and to put educational matters on the agenda of the social dialogue.

For trade unions and their members, the recognition of informal and non-formal education is a very important issue. Developments in this field should be followed closely. This could be an interesting topic for a European conference with room for exchange of experiences and best practices.

It could be interesting to get involved in the development of a system to recognize general competences acquired through informal and non-formal learning.

The European descriptors explaining the differences between the European professions are a necessary first step towards true free movement of professionals within the European Union. These descriptors for recognition of qualifications are quite simply translation tools of national differences into a comprehensive European language. This ‘language’ will be based mainly on instruments already put in place by the European Commission such as EQF, ECVET, EUROPASS and other criteria depending on the profession.

Higher education institutions should better meet the needs of the labour market through Lifelong Learning by creating:

- shorter programmes for further and continuous training for graduates
- work-based learning that combines theory with practice at the work place
- recognition of prior “non formal” learning, e.g. at the work place

Monitoring of on-the-job training and recognition of formal and informal learning should be a subject of collective agreements, not only from an economic perspective but as an individual right to recognition and documentation of competences.

d. Mobility as a “fair” and “safe” exercise

EUROCADRES considers that mobility should be encouraged through national employment strategies and lifelong learning schemes developing vocational and language skills. Concerted action with the social partners, local and regional authorities, learning and training centres and civil society should be organised in order to address practical and psychological obstacles to mobility, promote the concept of “fair mobility” and ensure compliance with labour standards and legal requirements by all people involved in the mobility process. The fact is that a large proportion of professionals in Europe who enter into a mobility experience are forced to do so.

EUROCADRES' approach is to contribute to better organised mobility with a true and transparent concept of the recognition of professional qualifications that in the future can enable people to see mobility as a career opportunity and advantage, as well as personal enrichment. *EUROCADRES* strongly believe that the flow of people across or within borders needs to take place under fair conditions.

Geographical mobility is difficult but important for the development of Europe. There are many barriers and removing them is no small task. *EUROCADRES* believe that a concept of “fair mobility” will overcome a number of these barriers and therefore suggests putting forward a proposal for a sabbatical leave for mobility.

“Fair mobility” is important for reaching a status of uniform appraisal, because it grants equal assessments and opens a dialogue between employee and employer. Binding and coherent EU legislation and a social protocol in the EU treaty are suggested pathways to “fair mobility”. We might also note that the Central and Eastern European countries believe that “fair mobility” could encompass abolition of the restrictions on free movement imposed by some countries. It is also believed that the concept should be broadened from the individual perspective to family members and all other possible stakeholders if a “win-win” situation is to be developed.

5.2. Policy recommendations and disseminations

a. European Commission

Policy Recommendations:

EUROCADRES encourages the European Commission to close the gap between the EQF and the NQF.

EUROCADRES encourages bridging of the gap between labour market and education through closer involvement of the social partners in the implementation of EQF, linked to the development of a common system for recognition of professional qualifications.

The EQF is structured horizontally, combining knowledge, skills and competences and vertically with a hierarchy of levels. *EUROCADRES* proposes to create an additional diagonal pathway in order for the system to better fit the individual.

EUROCADRES support the idea of making “knowledge” the fifth European freedom in addition to free movement of persons, capital, services and goods.

EUROCADRES will, together with our partners, return with a new proposal to create a “professional card” for Europe. *EUROCADRES* believe that this could be an effective tool for reaching a higher level of mobility through recognition of professional qualifications.

EUROCADRES supports the future development of EURES - the European Job Mobility Portal & Service -, which must give evidence of its added value. A clear shift will be needed in the future, after 15 years of existence. This economic crisis is an opportunity to re-position EURES in European employment policy:

- Establish a platform for a labour market information system, combining the data-bases of the public and private employment services. In the context of “New skills for new jobs”, this platform will make it possible to better anticipate the needs of the labour market over the short and medium term.

- Enhance information on the quality of job vacancies and the skills and competences needed for mobility. The recognition of qualifications is an essential prerequisite for mobility.
- Workers' freedom of movement is a freedom, not an obligation: this means that mobility is part of the solution to the current economic and employment crisis.
- The reinforcement of active labour market policies can help provide the necessary skills and competences for mobility in Europe. There are clear links between skills and mobility: countries - especially in this crisis situation - need people with the right skills and SMEs in particular need skills. People with experience abroad also enhance their employment opportunities.
- Better involvement of all stakeholders, especially the social partners (with their knowledge of workers' rights and fair mobility), public employment services, private employment services, etc.
- Placement is the missing link in both intra-EU-mobility and cross-border mobility. EURES can offer this service in collaboration with stakeholders. The public employment services can conclude bilateral or multilateral agreements to support the placement of people in other European countries. "Matching" is a key element of this process (e.g. a regularly updated list of 'most wanted qualifications and skills' on the labour market).
- Demographic challenges will also force Member States to take third-country workers into account. Enhancement of the "blue card" instrument as a real asset for mobility is important.

Dissemination:

EUROCADRES will prepare a communication to be sent to the European Parliament and to the European Commission where these findings are pointed out.

EUROCADRES welcomes and supports the communication on "New skills for new jobs" and will be an active advocate in its development, based on the findings of this project.

A protocol for social process, including a concept of "Fair Mobility", should be included in the EU treaty.

EUROCADRES welcomes the current discussions on the EURES Guidelines for 2010 - 2013 in view of enhancing its future role as the European Commission's network for mobility in Europe, in close collaboration with the national employment services.

b. For *EUROCADRES*

Policy recommendations:

A network on (higher) education policy and EQF will be set up within *EUROCADRES* where policy developments can be followed, experiences and approaches can be exchanged and training and awareness-raising can take place.

Fair mobility will be put on the agenda of the European social dialogue. Mobility should be based on a chain approach (leaving-staying-returning), seen from the perspective of the individual but also from the perspective of all stakeholders involved (win-win) and the individual's family.

EUROCADRES will launch the development of criteria for fair mobility and the collection of good practices, possibly leading to a label for fair mobility.

A proposal of sabbatical leave for mobility will be investigated and eventually put forward to the European Commission, based on the internal work of *EUROCADRES* and its members.

EUROCADRES will initiate work to define the individual and general competences for mobility.

Dissemination:

EUROCADRES will put fair mobility on the agenda of the European social dialogue by addressing the European Social Partners on the issue.

EUROCADRES will work together with its members and its decision-making bodies to continue its work to develop sound positions on higher education, mobility issues, recognition of qualifications and the importance of non-formal competences.

EUROCADRES will add an overview on the website of the different national evaluations during implementation of the EQF.

c. For National Members

Policy recommendations:

The members of *EUROCADRES* will be encouraged to closely follow the national implementation of EQF and to participate in the network for higher education that will be established in the coming period.

National representatives in the European Parliament should be approached to further strengthen the influence of social partners in the development of fair mobility as an issue for Europe's future.

Employer organisations are a key to success. *EUROCADRES* encourages our members to approach the employer organisations and involve them in the development of national policies.

Dissemination:

Knowledge of EQF/NQF is very limited at national level. There is a need for an information campaign through the members to raise the level of knowledge, thus creating more involvement and more debate among "ordinary citizens".

EUROCADRES encourages our members to reach collective agreements which strengthen the possibility for individuals and companies to adjust to the changing labour market, covering competence development and supporting mobility, education, and recognition of competences.

Employability for the future must be the aim where national instruments can be developed based on European experiences, reaching a situation where professional and managerial staff have increasing value on the labour market.

Bilateral trade union cooperation is also encouraged in order to better regulate and strengthen cross border mobility and exchange experiences between different trade unions, focusing on the right issues at the right time.



6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - List of participating organisations at the national seminars

Italy – Rome - 24/09/2008

Confederazione Italiana Archeologi

FILCAMS nazionale

ISFOL

FABI

CIDA

AP

CGIL

CNELFedermanagement

ASSOPROFESSIONI

Cons. Naz. Spedizionieri Doganali

Ansaldo Energia – Gruppo Finanza

Feder. Naz Colleghi Ipasvi

FILTEA – CGIL Nazionale

POT

Personecarriere

Agenquadri

AIDP

Confprofessioni

Romania –Cluj – 17/10/2008

FSLCPR

Denmark – Copenhagen - 3/11/2008

AKAVA (Confederation of Union for P&MS) – Finland

SACO (Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations) – Sweden

YS (Confederation of Vocational Trade Unions) – Norway

UNIO (Confederation of Unions for Professionals) – Norway

AC (Danish Confederation of Professional Associations) - Denmark

FTF (Confederation of Professionals) – Denmark

Latvia – Riga - 10/11/2008

- Training centre of joint-stock company “Sadales tiks”
- Association of adult and vocational education
- Communication Workers Trade Union
- Trade Union “Energy”
- Trade Union of Construction Workers
- Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS)
- Administration of Vocational Education (Ministry of Education and Science)
- Forest Workers Trade Union
- State Employment Agency
- Trade Union of Construction Workers, “Training Centre of Latgale” Ltd.
- Association for Human Resource Management of Latvia
- Trade Union of Public Service Employees LAKRS
- Joint-stock company “Rīgas Siltums”

Appendix 2 - Questionnaire

THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (EQF) AND ITS NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

To what extent are the social partners, in particular the trade unions, in your country involved in the development of a national qualification framework, linked to the European qualification framework?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| a. not involved | 19% |
| b. consulted | 44% |
| c. actively involved | 37% |
| d. other, please specify | |

How can *EUROCADRES* contribute to or help its national member organizations in the national implementation of the European Qualification framework (EQF) (and European educational developments in general)? Prioritise the following possibilities from 1 (highest priority) to 3 (lowest priority)

- an overview of the different national developments in the implementation of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) on the EUROCADRES website
(1=58% - 2=8% - 3=34%)
- Training and information on European educational developments and the role of trade unions at national level? (1=25% - 2=42% - 3=33%)
- the creation of a European network on trade unions and European educational policy (exchange of information and good practices)
(1=31% - 2 = 54% - 3=15%)
- other, please specify

EUROCADRES is recognized as an associated member of the *Bologna Process* and attends the *European Bologna follow-up meetings*. In April 2009 there is a ministerial conference on the Bologna Process. What is the most important political statement *EUROCADRES* could make on the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the Bologna process?

FAIR MOBILITY

To what extent is (international) mobility in your opinion an issue in your country (in legislation, collective, professional and interprofessional agreements)?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| a. not an issue at all | 13% |
| b. an issue, but from a negative perspective | 37% |
| c. an important issue | 37% |
| d. other, please specify | 13% |

How can *EUROCADRES* and its project partners contribute or help you in the promotion of (fair) mobility? Prioritize the following possibilities from 1 (highest priority) to 4 (lowest priority)

- the development of a catalogue of examples of (fair) mobility
(1=10% - 2=30% - 3=40% - 4=10% - 5=10%)
- the development of a system of sabbatical leave for mobility
(1=18% - 2=0% - 3=27% - 4=45% - 5=9%)
- the development of criteria to evaluate the fairness of mobility, possibly leading to a 'fair mobility' label or code of conduct
(1=40% - 2=40% - 3=10% - 4=10%)
- the definition, operationalization and recognition of individual and general competences for mobility
(1=30% - 2=20% - 3=20% - 4=30%)
- other, please specify

In your opinion, what are the most important political statements *EUROCADRES* could make on fair mobility in the European social dialogue? Prioritize the following possibilities from 1 (highest priority) to 5 (lowest priority).

- a better gender balance in the different labour markets is a prerequisite for a fair mobility
(1=8% - 2=8% - 3=8% - 4=30% - 5=46%)
- widening the mobility concept from the individual perspective to the individual's family
(1=33% - 2=8% - 3=17% - 4=25% - 5=14%)
- widening the mobility concept from the individual perspective to the advantages for all stakeholders involved (win-win)
(1=50% - 2=34% - 3=8% - 4=8%)
- stressing the chain approach in mobility (leaving-staying-returning)
(1=23% - 2=38% - 3=31% - 4=8%)
- brain drain, migration and wage differences
(1=17% - 2=17% - 3=33% - 4=25% - 5=8%)
- other, please specify

MONITORING OF ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

To what extent is monitoring of on-the-job training an issue in your country (in legislation, collective, professional and interprofessional agreements)?

- a. not an issue at all 19%
- b. an issue, but from the perspective of employability and not from an individual perspective 37%
- c. an important issue 44%
- d. other, please specify

How can *EUROCADRES* contribute to or help its national member organizations in the promotion of on-the-job training? Prioritize the following possibilities from 1 (highest priority) to 4 (lowest priority)

- a. an overview of the different national developments and approaches to on-the-job training on the *EUROCADRES* website
(1 = 60% - 2=0% - 3=30% - 4=10%)
- b. involvement in the development of professional cards
(1=0% - 2=22% - 3=33% - 4=45%)
- c. the development of a general tool to assess and document one's general competences (as a service to be provided through the national members)
(1=33% - 2=56% - 3=0% - 4=11%)
- d. the establishment of a European multistakeholder dialogue on this issue
(1=20% - 2=20% - 3=30% - 4=30%)
- e. Other, specify....

What are the most important political statements that *EUROCADRES* should make on 'on-the-job training' in the European social dialogue? Prioritize the following possibilities from 1 (highest priority) to 4 (lowest priority)

- a. formal acceptance of on-the-job training as the right of the individual and not subject to the willingness of an employer
(1=54% - 2=9% - 3=18% 4=18%)
- b. the importance of on-the-job training in the European Qualification Framework (EQF), fair mobility and transparency of qualifications
(1=27% - 2=36% - 3=27% - 4=9%)
- c. the need for a more European approach to the recognition of general and professional competences
(1=36% - 2=27% - 3=27% - 4=9%)
- d. The need to give more acceptance and value to aspects of non-formal learning and on-the-job training.
(1=17% - 2=17% - 3=17% - 4=50%)

Appendix 3 - List of abbreviations

ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ECVET	European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQF	European Qualification Framework
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PM&S	Professional and Managerial Staff
TU	Trade Union
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Appendix 4 - Short description of some concepts

Blue Card

The Blue Card is a proposed EU-wide work permit allowing highly-skilled non-EU citizens to work and live in any country within the European Union, excluding Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom, which are not covered by the proposal. It is inspired by the United States' Green Card.

Bologna

The Bologna Process aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. The Bologna Declaration of June 1999 has put in motion a series of reforms needed to make European higher education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents.

Bruges-Copenhagen

The Bruges-Copenhagen Process aims to enhance cooperation in vocational education and training (VET) in Europe.

Directive 2005/36

Directive 2005/36/EC, adopted on 7 September 2005 by the European Union, consolidates and modernises the rules currently regulating the recognition of professional qualifications.

ECTS

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education across the European Union and other collaborating European countries.

ECVET

The European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) will give people greater control over their individual learning experiences and make it more attractive to move between different countries and different learning environments.

EURES

Set up in 1993, EURES is a co-operation network between the European Commission and the public employment services of the EEA Member States (the EU countries plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and other partner organisations.

EUROPASS

EUROPASS brings together into a single framework several existing European tools for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences.

European Higher Education Area

The creation of a European Higher Education Area is the objective of the Bologna process - to create more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe.

European Qualification Framework

The European Qualification Framework (EQF) acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more intelligible across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning.

Formal learning

Formal learning is learning that takes place within a teacher-student relationship, such as in a school system.

Informal Learning

Informal learning occurs through the experience of day-to-day situations (for example, one learns to look ahead while walking because of the danger inherent in not paying attention to where one is going). It is learning from life.

Learning outcome

A learning outcome defines what an individual is expected to know or be able to do at the end of a learning experience

Lisbon Strategy

The Lisbon Strategy, also known as the Lisbon Agenda or Lisbon Process, is an action and development plan for the European Union. Its aim is to make the EU “the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment by 2010”.

Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is organised learning outside the formal learning system. For example: learning by coming together with people with similar interests and exchanging viewpoints, in clubs or in (international) youth organizations, workshops.

Vocational Education and Training

Vocational Education and Training (VET) prepares learners for jobs that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation



7.

PROJECT PARTNERS

8.1. EUROCADRES

EUROCADRES is the Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff. It is an organisation associated with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). *EUROCADRES* is recognised by the European Commission as a European social partner. *EUROCADRES* covers both the public and private sectors and represents more than 5 million professional and managerial staff.

8.2. Ceplis

CEPLIS is the only inter-professional association representing the liberal professions at Community level. As such, it is an organization approved by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The aim of CEPLIS is the study and promotion, both at the scientific and cultural level, of information and data related to the exercise and policies of the liberal professions.

8.3. EAPM

EAPM is represented through its Italian member organisation AIDP in the project. EAPM is an umbrella body of national organisations which represents human resource professionals. It seeks to promote and develop knowledge of human resource issues, human resource activities, and their importance to industry, commerce and both public and private sector administration. It is an experience-sharing organisation without profit-related objectives.



8. EXPERTS

Pieter Tratsaert and Erik De Smedt from IN SOCIETY SPRL provided research, presentations and other services to *EUROCADRES* during this project.

IN SOCIETY SPRL has also contributed to other *EUROCADRES* projects: “The European management model as best practice for corporate social responsibility” (2002) and “Responsible European Management: Skills, Methods and Stakeholder Engagement (2004)”, as well as to the joint *EUROCADRES* and EMCEF conference: “Development of Mobility Support in the EU and non-EU Countries for Professional and Managerial Staff in European Multinational Companies (2005)”.

IN SOCIETY SPRL is specialized in studies, project management and project implementation in the field of strategy and organisational development, bridging technical-managerial and human components. True stakeholder dialogue processes are a core feature of their approach.



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